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system

THE  
SLAYER'S  
GUIDE  
TO  
GOBLINS



S Girard





## G O B L I N S

- Sloped forehead
- Flat face
- Small Sharp
- Fangs
- Long arms - almost to the ground.

- Small humanoid  
with great  
numbers  
overrun  
civilized  
areas.



Clawed  
hands  
and feet.

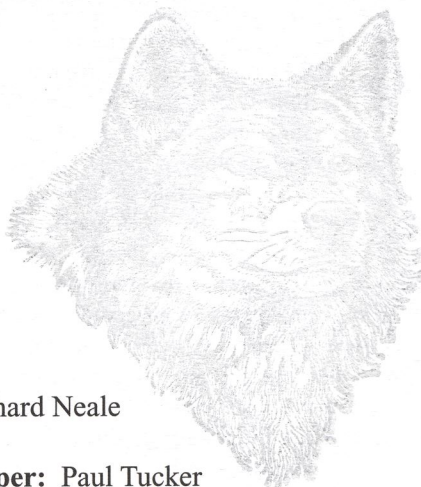






# The Slayer's Guide To Goblins

Shawn Girard



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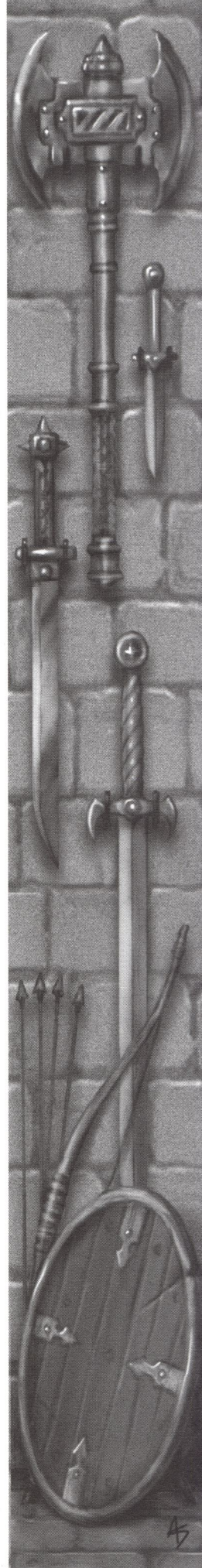
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# INTRODUCTION

For millennia, evil warlords, wizards, dragons and larger goblinoids have enslaved the lowly goblin. Untold thousands are slain every year by these same dark masters, by the armies of good folk everywhere and by countless brave adventurers. Through seemingly endless adversity, the goblins overcome and continue to thrive.

Throughout history, creatures of all types have underestimated the race's cunning and sheer will to survive. Often they have paid for this misconception with their lives. Deep in the warren of a goblin tribe there is no room for error. This harsh and unforgiving environment shapes the goblin and thwarts the invader.

Full of a hatred for all life, driven by their dark god to unspeakable depravity and far more cunning than Game Masters and players have given them credit for, goblins are truly worthy of our respect. They breed faster than most races and, given time, can outlast and overwhelm most enemies. Masters of stealth, traps and ambushes, goblins are rarely spotted until it is too late.

This book will introduce you to the customs, legends and culture of one of the smallest but most formidable races in the land. The information herein will equip

you if you let it and bring you safely home when you next cross the path of the 'mere' goblin.

## THE SLAYER'S GUIDES

This series of supplements, designed for use with all fantasy D20 game systems, takes an exhaustive look at a specific monster race. The guides thoroughly detail the race's beliefs, society and warfare methodology. Typically these will be races all but ignored by Game Masters and players who slay countless numbers of them on their quest for experience and magic.

Surely things are not this simple. An entire race does not just suddenly materialise in a campaign world and very few monsters exist solely to wage war. Why do these creatures live where they do? How did they get there? What are they doing when the players are not around?

## GOBLINS - FILTH AND MALICE

Each *Slayer's Guide* features a single race, in this case the goblin. In the following pages is a wealth of information on the physiology of the goblin species as well as an overview of goblins' typical habitat. You will learn the fundamentals of their violent society and the bloody religion driving them. Game Masters will be provided with a number of scenario hooks to bring goblins into their existing games, as well as information designed to help them portray these creatures with more personality than ever, injecting renewed challenge into old encounters with faceless enemies. Also provided herein is important information on how goblins wage war, stage raids and their view of combat in general.

Game Masters will find a ready-made warren, complete with background, occupants and tactics at the end of the book, and statistics for standard goblin archetypes for use in encounters. The Game Master can insert the adventure into a campaign as a straightforward dungeon crawl. More likely, however, once the strengths and tactics of the goblin race are better understood, this challenge will stretch over a number of exciting gaming sessions.

With the information provided herein, Game Masters should be able to ensure their players never again encounter these cunning and malicious creatures without giving them a healthy dose of respect. In sufficient numbers, goblins are a match for any challenge. They surely understand this maxim and should be making the most of it in every campaign.





Tabithias couldn't believe their situation. When the falling ceiling crushed Korl, they lost their lone fighter as well as the single member of the group with darkvision. The cave-in had also blocked their only known exit. Although she was sure there were others, finding one would be a challenge. Thurm, the cleric, had been gravely wounded by archers as he tried to save his friend but eventually had to abandon the dwarf and join with her and the halfling as they fled.

It was a grisly business, to hear the goblins going over the body of the dead dwarf. Thankfully for the others, she was the only one who understood their vile tongue. The creatures' gloating had accorded the party enough time to escape but it was not long before they were lost. The dark corridors, some leading nowhere, some too small to enter without crawling, seemed to snake forever in all directions, intersecting again and again. Around every corner, it seemed, were a handful of archers who would loose a volley and then retreat. Primitive traps plagued them mercilessly and their spells had dwindled fast.

Sarem, the rogue, who had been scouting ahead, returned and informed her the *darkvision* spell she had cast had worn off. Tabithias cast the spell on the halfling for the last time today. Soon their last torch would be expended and their lamp oil had been lost when Korl had fallen so they would shortly be down to a few light spells. Before casting *darkvision* on the rogue and setting her on point the goblin arrows had devastated the group, raining down death from a darkness they could not penetrate.

As they walked she began to wonder if they would ever see the sun again but her thoughts were interrupted by another rain of arrows. The halfling was running toward them, motioning for them to run. 'A bunch of 'em,' she managed to get out, 'they have wolves with them!'

The trio rushed back down the hall to a sizeable chamber with a door. Thurm turned to secure the portal with iron spikes while Tabithias used another of her precious spells to magically bar the portal. 'This won't last for long,' she said, more to herself than to anyone else.

As Sarem readied her crossbow, Thurm was lighting incense and preparing one of his last spells. 'The glyph will blast them when they open the door,' he said as he dug out the precious diamond dust the spell required, 'but then I'll be down to my mace and my faith.' Then he added solemnly, 'I pray they suffice.'

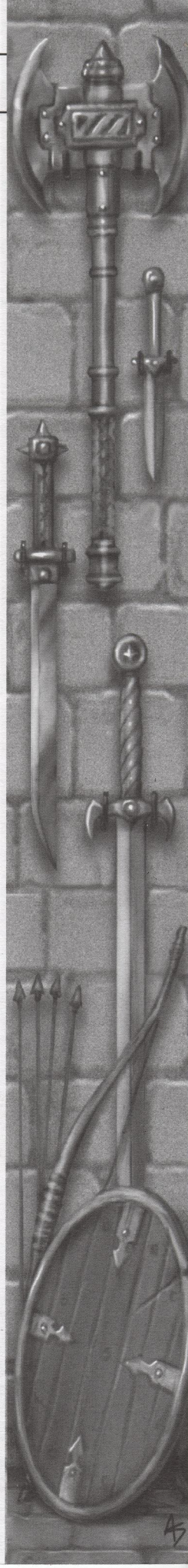
The priest began his spell and a small door, set cunningly into the wall swung open slowly. Several very large goblins strode in brandishing weapons. The lips of the largest goblin curled back as he spoke, 'Gûrka alk krenach vrechig!' Tabithias chose again not to translate for the others.

Two of the creatures let loose javelins at Thurm but the cleric had finished his spell and dodged the missiles. Drawing his mace, the large human began to close with the goblins. The elf backed away and reached for an old scroll. She heard the enemies hacking at the sealed door behind her and watched as Sarem buried a bolt in the goblin leader's shoulder. The creature snarled and charged the rogue.

'Look out!', the elf exclaimed and the *lightning bolt* she cast from the scroll ripped through the line of enemies, barely missing both of her friends. Only the surprised leader remained in the aftermath and he hastily turned to escape but stopped.

The chamber door splintered and Thurm's glyph exploded in a mist of acid. A horrid cacophony of screams went up but a second rank of goblins were already stepping over their dead and dying comrades. One of these, a priest, filled the room with a globe of impenetrable darkness.

Before the darkness came, however, the heroes caught a glimpse of the red eyes and black fur of an enormous wolf as it stepped through the doorway.





# GOBLIN PHYSIOLOGY

**G**oblins are among the smallest of the intelligent races. Even so, they have managed to fill the nightmares of children and adults everywhere for centuries. Uniformly bestial and savage, their reputation for cruelty and violence rivals races many times their size. Many victims of a goblin raid will never spot the stealthy raiders but if they are fortunate enough to see them emerge from the shadows they shall find only malice and death in their blood red eyes.

Male goblins average three and a half feet tall with variations of six inches in either direction. The shorter group is perhaps underrepresented, facing increased mortality in the highly-competitive tribe. For their small size, goblins are quite tough. Their bodies are virtually devoid of fat and wrapped in sinewy muscle. This muscle mass makes them heavier than expected, about 55 pounds at average height. Females tend to be four to six inches shorter than males but are actually heavier, averaging 60 pounds. As they are sedentary and primarily devoted to the bearing and nursing of young, female goblins are equipped with a thick layer of fat sustaining both her and her young through endless cycles of pregnancy. While they are weak by comparison with larger humanoids, pound-for-pound, goblins are quite powerful, especially when driven by desperation.

Goblins have a fearsome appearance, even in the light of day. They have wicked, oversized mouths with protruding canines, filthy claws on their hands and feet and oily skin covered in patches of dull black hair. Their faces are ugly and animalistic, devoid of facial hair with the exception of a few males sporting thin, uneven tufts on their cheeks and neck. This same wiry hair, often worn long, covers the creature's head. Goblin ears are large and pointed and their wide, bony noses are barely raised from their squat faces. Beneath a sloping forehead and prominent brow are two deeply-set eyes, reminiscent of dirty glass. Given their appearance, one might think these creatures stupid but to draw such a conclusion would be a terrible mistake. As intelligent as the average human, goblins are far more cunning and dangerous.

The goblin's sharp eyes, large ears and sensitive nose account for the astonishing awareness they exhibit. These heightened senses often allow them to detect enemies long before they themselves are spotted. Goblins have understood and exploited this advantage for ages. They also have powerful darkvision, incredible agility and a talent for remaining unseen which is rarely equalled.

The irony of their powerful sense of smell is the goblin's own terrible odour. Whether because they lair in filth and offal or due to their natural body oil, goblins smell awful. Normally this odour is only noticeable in close quarters but in areas where goblins congregate the stench is cloying, and although it has no adverse effect, it will linger for days on those who are exposed too long.

Goblins prefer action to words but when they do speak they use the harsh, guttural language of all goblinoids. Their voices tend to be pitched a bit higher than humans. More intelligent goblins will often learn the common tongue, the difficult language of the worg or occasionally orcish.

## Healthy Bodies, Diseased Minds

Goblin living conditions are notorious for their filth, parasites and vermin. This may be due to a racial preference for such an environment or because they simply despoil any area where they settle. What is certain is the creatures have amazing immune systems. Warrens have no sanitation and typically standing water, carrion and other offal are everywhere. Goblins seem immune to the natural diseases and parasites thriving in such conditions. It is not known if this resistance arose over time, in response to the filthy environment, or if the trait serves a more general purpose. Scholars have noted, for instance, how a sick goblin becomes an easy target for any healthy goblin in sight.

## PHYSICAL VARIATIONS

In the tribe, goblin eye colour will range from crimson to dull yellow and height, weight and facial characteristics vary considerably. One fairly standard trait, however, is skin colour. Colouring, always a shade of red, orange or yellow, will be fairly homogeneous in a tribe. Dominant males tend to monopolise breeding and over time create a consistent bloodline. Even so, variations exist and in any group of 50 goblins one would encounter some variation in skin colour. In a very large tribe, one



is likely to note a wide spectrum of colour among a minority of members.

In humanoid societies such variant skin colours often mark a member as an outcast. Goblins, however, have no such aversion to an individual's colour as long as they are strong. This uncharacteristic tolerance may have its origin in the age-old exploitation and slavery of goblins, where they were often forced into mixed-tribe environments. Most tribes have some level of cross-tribe breeding in their lineage and are accepting of variants among them. A chief may even tolerate other goblin tribes in his territory, for a time, with some tribes ultimately merging rather than competing. This is especially likely when powerful enemies are in the vicinity and threaten both tribes. These mergers will naturally increase variation in a tribe but require a strong leader in order to be successful and to limit the level of bloodshed.

## NOT WITHOUT STYLE

Though brutish and vulgar, goblins seem uncommonly concerned with appearance. This manifests in the popularity of body modification and adornment. This practice seems at least partially indicative of prestige. In a society devoid of personal identity, such adornment may also be an effort to stand out. A common technique is the piercing of one's ears with rings of precious metal. Most tribal adults, male and female, will have pierced ears with chieftains, great warriors and priests frequently sporting a score of rings. Observers will notice many ears marked by notches and tears. This is likely due to a change in an individual's status, theft or simple tribal infighting.

Goblins also adorn themselves with tattooing or scarification. These practices are quite widespread and the subject matter tends to focus on tribal totems, themes of war, hate and death. Prominent battle scars are also displayed proudly and seem to increase one's status. Many have noted the marks of branding on goblin specimens but this is probably not done to adorn so much as a form of punishment or to mark slaves and females. When these marks are the result of punishment they are often quite severe.

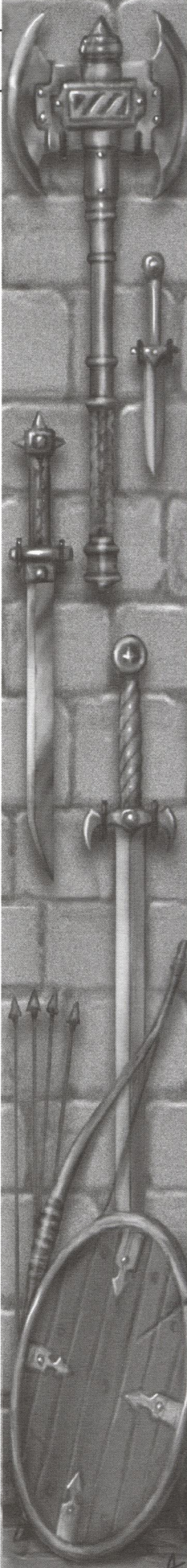
The goblin sense of style does not appear to extend to their clothing, which is often threadbare and torn. When they can, they don crude leather garments but will regularly settle for what they steal from others.

Males favour dark breeches, cloaks and shirts while females wear simple shifts, suiting their lifestyle of cyclical pregnancy.

## THE GOBLIN LIFECYCLE

The majority of females are considered communal property with a small number branded as the property of a chief, priest or hero. Females' lives are only slightly better than slaves but even the lowest goblin understands how important the female is to the success of the tribe. This important role keeps them from being treated too poorly and they often escape the brutality of tribal life. Only the sick, old or troublesome females will usually be killed.

All mature males have the right to breed with the communal females (known as the stew) but the strongest often dominate and fierce fighting can accompany breeding. Females are incredibly fertile and the majority of couplings result in pregnancy. Once conceived, foetuses gestate for five months and, after pregnancy, the new mother is fertile again.





within eight to 12 weeks. Most females give birth, usually to two or three young, once a year and those remaining infertile too long are considered cursed.

Goblin mothers are thought to share the canine trait of collecting sperm from multiple males to fertilise different eggs. This might account for why children born to the same mother at the same time often exhibit features resembling different males. Females also seem to exhibit the ability to determine the sex of a foetus to meet the prevailing needs of a tribe. Typically 30 to 40% of young are born female but when the need arises an entire stew may produce babies of a single sex.

Young goblins are able to crawl within three months and walk in six. By the end of their first year they have their signature fangs and coarse black hair. From then on they are fed mostly meat, freeing their mothers to nurse their newest young. In their third year a goblin is left to fend for itself among

the group of other young. Here it learns to survive, competing for dominance and food. By the age of nine a goblin reaches maturity and joins the tribe.

Although goblins can live 50 years, few survive even 20, with females and priests living longest. Among the young, more than a third will never achieve maturity due to competition among their peers, predators such as giant rats or cannibalism. This last phenomenon is seen usually when a pregnant female preys on the weakest of the young to nourish her as she carries the next generation. Females themselves rarely succumb to the random and violent nature of goblin society but are very often victims of complications in childbirth. Males often lose their lives in raids but they are just as likely to be killed by a rival or by tribal decree if they show themselves weak or incompetent. Entire raiding parties have been sacrificed to The Mighty One if they fail to provide sacrificial victims and scouting parties have been slain and eaten if they fail to provide adequate food.

## THE GOBLIN DIET

The goblin diet is as varied as their habitat but meat is preferred in every case. Whatever form it might take, goblins prefer to be total carnivores. Insects, snakes, bats, rats and grubs form the staples for many tribes and those close to the surface come to depend on game animals, birds and fish to feed their population. Goblins are also not above cannibalism of the weak (the young, old, sick or dead) or eating carrion but vegetables are avoided whenever possible. There are some reports of tribes cultivating mushrooms and other fungi but these reports, if true, are the minority and goblins have never been known to cultivate crops above ground.

Any abundance of food in an area will cause a population explosion and as the number of goblins increases, they tend to deplete every available food source in the area and fall prey to their lack of planning. These tribes are forced to relocate in order to sustain their numbers. This cycle of abundance and scarcity leads many tribes to starvation and ruin. Cannibalism in these lean times is even more common as little is required to turn a hungry tribe upon itself.

Tribes do not raise domestic livestock but it is not unknown for larger, slave-taking tribes to use





slave labour to tend small herds of animals captured in raids. This practice is less widespread than it might be as the presence of animal herds tends to conflict with the racial instinct to remain hidden. It is also difficult for goblins to restrain themselves from eating the slaves tending the herds.

Goblin tribes are likely to face many lean days due to their own short sightedness. This fact and the racial conditioning born of generations spent in of captivity, abuse and privation have equipped them with physical endurance to help them survive famine. In general, a goblin is very resistant to hunger and may operate for five or six days before suffering its adverse effects. Much folklore has also grown up in goblin society about how to stave off the demon of starvation. This lore recommends filling the stomach with foreign matter such as wood, stones or sand and also points to certain berries and plants which can suppress the appetite when ingested.

## THE GOBLIN MIND

The forces driving a goblin are powerful, deep and haunting. Half cultural and half instinctual, these compelling fears, desires and hatreds carry the goblin through a bleak and savage life. Individually and in small groups, goblins are aware of their vulnerability. Hobgoblins, orcs and worse creatures inhabit the world, waiting to enslave or slay them and the good races are ready to attack if ever the goblin leaves the safety of the shadows. This caution has given rise to the idea of 'goblin cowardice'. To some degree this is true, a goblin does avoid an open battle on enemy ground and will often flee to the shadows. A simple explanation such as 'goblin cowardice', however,

fails to tell the whole story. With sufficient numbers and preparation, these creatures willingly face any enemy and will prove a vicious, unrelenting and memorable foe.

In the tribe, goblin fears and behaviours truly reach their heights. From the earliest moments a goblin is taught the harsh price of showing weakness, failing or a misguided allegiance. These youngsters watch their peers starved, bullied and even killed for minor errors. If it reaches maturity a goblin is well acclimatised to its environment and has learned to manoeuvre carefully, obeying the strong and exploiting the weak. They are fully committed to take any action necessary to never be last, weakest or slowest. Just as they are ever on the lookout for another goblin to dominate, they are equally watchful of their leaders. Each of them understands their own status in the tribe can advance when the strong fall. Goblin leaders are typically aware of this danger and keep the tribe busy enough raiding, scouting and fighting among themselves to maintain power.

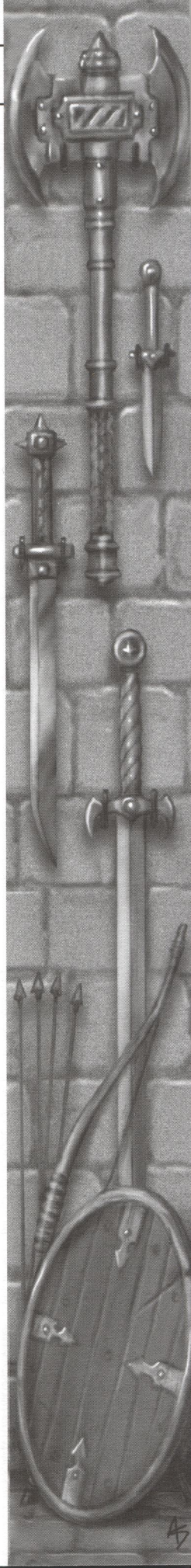
A seething hatred of all other life, even nature itself, is the cornerstone of the goblin psyche and they live to defile, despoil and profane. The priesthood of The Mighty One is relentless in its recitation of this hateful tenet and every goblin is eager to murder, pillage and terrorise the enemies of their god. If the selfishness and deceit of their hearts did not channel such energy to infighting, there is little doubt these creatures would be a world-shaping force. Few races are as prolific or relentless as goblins and countless enemies would have been forced from their cities, towns and strongholds long ago, before the unending waves of these cruel marauders.

### The Coming of the Goblins

Long ago, The Mighty One watched the new world, the races and where they settled. He watched the foolish orc god set his people against the good races forever, hoping to acquire their land. He knew he would never match the initiative of the humans, the ingenuity of the gnomes, the industry of the dwarves or majesty of the elves but he saw a way in his black heart to best them all. He retreated to the underdark, to make the goblin.

He made them small and stealthy, to avoid their enemies but gave them great cunning so they could trick their foes and strike from the shadows at unexpected times and places. Instead of great strength, they would rely on great numbers to overwhelm all foes in time. Rather than making or building, they would take what they wanted from the weak. So the mighty among them would rule and the weak would be culled, he set them forever at odds with each other. Lastly, he taught them to hate life and beauty, charging them to destroy it.

For ages, goblins bred in the underdark unopposed. When other races started to gain territory in this lightless world, the goblins made war but were often defeated or enslaved. After a century of warfare the priests of The Mighty One heralded the time of ascension and many of the free tribes migrated to the surface. So it has been for centuries with the followers of The Mighty One spreading to all known lands.





# GOBLIN HABITAT

**G**oblins can survive wherever there is air, water and some form of nourishment. They have been encountered everywhere from the arctic to trackless deserts and remote islands. Given a choice, goblins will lair underground but as this is not always possible, they have adapted themselves to numerous alternative arrangements. If food is abundant and powerful enemies are scarce, any plot of land can become an ideal goblin habitat.

Born in the endless black caverns of the underdark, goblins are quite comfortable in this unforgiving environment. Unfortunately for the surface world, when races such as the drow and duergar began to claim larger territories they slew and enslaved countless thousands of goblins. This drove the survivors to the surface in huge numbers and today it is unusual to find goblins living free in the underdark. Those who have survived have done so by ranging far, raiding and avoiding drow hunting parties. These tribes usually establish hidden safe dens throughout their territory and are masters of the trap and the ambush. Without the worg of their surface brethren among them, these goblins are even less likely to face an enemy openly.

Cavernous exits from the underdark were the first locations settled by goblins following their surface migration. The combination of plentiful resources and easy access to the comfort of the underdark (into which few races will delve) allowed them to thrive. Eventually other humanoids, most notably their hobgoblin relatives, began to target these locales with slave raids and many goblins migrated again. Today the majority of goblins on the surface inhabit cave and tunnel systems ranging from bear dens to abandoned or conquered mines. Although lazy, goblins are fair miners and can modify even poor locations to accommodate their tribe. The worg, found among many tribes, has made it possible for them to extend their influence across hills and mountains virtually everywhere.

When it is not possible to locate an underground lair, a tribe will seek ruins or other abandoned structures to inhabit. As a last resort, however, they will make shelter from whatever is available. Goblins are not overly industrious and such building efforts are

often poorly conceived, roughly implemented and unsightly. Unlike their hobgoblin relatives, goblins rely primarily on camouflage for defence and will rarely build a stockade or wall around their lair. One surface locale where goblins have managed to thrive is the marshland. These environments are usually remote enough to offer the tribe the protection it needs even when close to towns and roads. The swamp also offers abundant food to those with an indiscriminate palette and few races have a less discriminating palette than goblins.

## MOVING THE TRIBE

Few things are as tempting to a hobgoblin or orc war band than a goblin tribe on the move. Without proper preparation such moves can, and often do, end in disaster. It is extremely difficult to organise and co-ordinate the move of a goblin tribe. This is especially true for their own leaders who tend to use force as the only tool for motivation and explanation. Given these issues, leaders would never relocate but the tribe's tendency to despoil any territory over time makes moving an inevitable part of goblin life.

In order to select a new lair, scouts are sent far in search of a suitable locale. They return with reports on both available resources and enemy populations. Goblins are culturally obsessed with the avoidance of subjugation and it is a major factor in the selection of a lair. Such caution may even lead a chief to select an area where raiding is poor and the tribe suffers. This will usually herald a change in leadership as powerful warriors arise to challenge the wisdom of the chief.

The emphasis of the move itself is not speed but stealth. Once the new location is chosen and a route selected, the tribe moves in small groups over a number of nights. This process may stretch for weeks in a large tribe. Once settled, they begin the work of making the new lair invisible to observers. Soon after, the first raids begin. While there is no such thing as a 'typical' goblin lair, wherever they settle, the territory is likely to be changed forever by their coming.



# GOBLIN SOCIETY

**R**ule by strength and terror is the philosophy of a goblin chief. Above all he understands there are goblins ready to replace him at the first sign of weakness. This paradigm of leadership shapes the tribal culture. Each goblin clamours to show deference to those above them while lording over those who are weaker. Those tribe members at the bottom of this social order, called Il-Mûk (literally 'no voice'), face a bleak existence indeed, one of daily beatings, ridicule and servitude. When life must be sacrificed, be it to a deity or to an enemy, it is sure to be a life from the Il-Mûk.

The reign of a particular ruler in any tribe might last a few hours or five years. Rare, indeed is the goblin that can keep his tribe content for a longer period. The chief is usually a strong or cunning warrior but The Mighty One encourages his priests to seek leadership positions as well. It is even possible a skulk or other rogue might rise, by virtue of his deceitfulness, to lead a tribe. The chief presides over all matters of military and domestic life, sharing power with priests and powerful warriors. He sits in judgement over all matters of law and determines appropriate punishment for offenders.

Criminals are dealt with swiftly in the tribe. Punishments are harsh even for small infractions but are not always lethal. Branding, eye gouging and bone breaking are staples of the goblin justice system. These punishments are brutal in order to send a clear message. It is for the same reason that offenders are punished publicly. It is an irony lost on goblins that due to the arbitrary nature of tribal laws it is not possible to deter criminals. One might be a criminal for spilling the soup one was carrying to a powerful warrior. On a bad day, this offence could get the criminal branded a clumsy ape.

Tribes of goblins are usually smaller than two hundred males. Larger tribes certainly exist but would need a very powerful leader indeed. Legends do exist, however, of goblin tribes in the underdark, numbering in the thousands, ruled by great and terrible goblin kings. A tribe will organise around a single lair called a warren. Even surface lairs are likely to have tunnels and underground chambers. Goblins are fair miners and love to be below ground. Females and young may be divided into communal groups or housed all together. Males live among the females but sleep in small groups according to their status or role. The chief and other prominent goblins almost always have separate chambers, often with females to attend them.

## ON MAKING AND TAKING

Goblins adhere to the age-old economic and industrial philosophy of all goblinoids, 'Why make when you can take'. This philosophy mandates they settle at least reasonably close to inhabited lands. A major focus of a goblin raid is usually the acquisition of tools, weapons, food and armour. Being too lazy to care for goods, most of what they do own is in poor repair. These creatures possess no concept of personal ownership and the strongest warriors quickly claim the best equipment, often violently. Any true wealth is the property of the tribe, held by the chief and passing to the new chief upon succession. The average goblin sees little in the way of gold and gems.

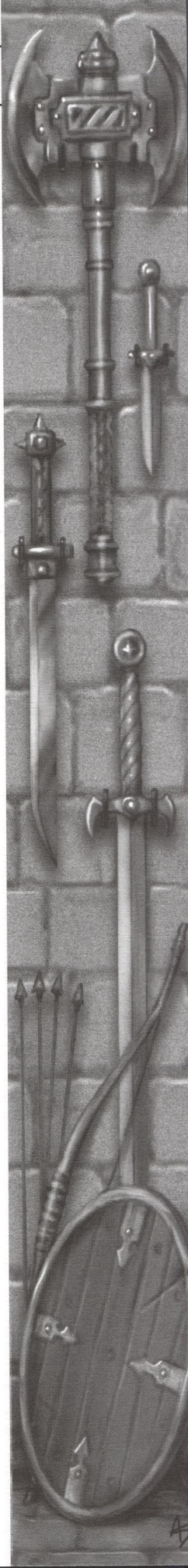
Many tribes have found good fortune by sending bands of skilled raiders to follow bugbears, orcs or gnolls on their raids. These larger raiders often overlook what is useful to a goblin, concentrating on real treasure and the joy of killing. Although lucrative, such parasitic behaviour carries great risk. All of these races would turn on the goblins if they discovered them. The leader and members of a rewarding 'shadow raid' can gain great prestige within the tribe and this is often worth the risk.

## GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

Goblins hate all life and beauty categorically. They have an enmity with all creatures but dwarves and goblins have warred for centuries beneath the earth and a special hatred exists between the two races. There is also a long history of conflict with kobolds and gnomes who often compete directly for territory with goblins. Unlike the powerful dwarves, who regularly slaughter goblin war parties, goblin raiders prey upon these weaker races mercilessly.

Just as goblins prey on those weaker than them, more powerful races share territory with goblins and prey on them. Since time unremembered, orcs, hobgoblins, gnolls and other humanoid races have been frequent and dangerous enemies of the goblin. These raiders often enslave some or all of a tribe but just as often they will extort an ongoing tribute from the goblins in gold, goods and slaves.

Unless they are attacked, the goblin tribe rarely resists these raiders once they have located the warren, though they might relocate if possible. That said, it is rare for any race to exist in goblin territory undetected and the tribe will take every measure possible to conceal their presence from an enemy. If deemed possible, the goblins might launch raids of their own to kill enemy rearguard and scout units. In this way, through stealth







and surprise, goblins can eliminate a more powerful foe over time.

Over the centuries, goblins have interbred and intermingled with other tribes, in captivity and in the world. The race has, therefore, developed a remarkable tolerance between goblin tribes. When two goblin tribes meet, the stronger tribe may assimilate the weaker, often after only minor bloodshed. Individual goblins from the smaller tribe will need to establish their place in the hierarchy of the tribe. Once they are part of the tribe they will be treated as any other goblin (i.e. poorly). The reason for this tolerant behaviour may have its roots in the racial tendency to congregate and the belief there is safety in numbers. Whatever the reason, it is more often better to merge than to compete for the same limited resources.

## SLAVERY

Slavery, for the purpose of labour, ritual sacrifice and food is well established in goblin society. Slaves are most often the result of encounters with small groups of other races. Goblins almost never enslave other goblins and most larger and monstrous races prove difficult to control. Most slaves tend to be gnomes, halflings and humans. Isolated homesteads and small caravans can yield prisoners but it is unclear why slaves are taken in one raid and not in other, similar forays. Goblins rarely

They were in complete blackness. Sarem knew the spell, as the halfling had seen Thurm cast it many times. She had heard the goblin shaman chanting but was unable to interrupt the spell. Now the same shaman or another had brought a magical silence on the room. Surely the creatures were searching the darkness for her and her friends now. Luckily for her, she was small enough to get around unnoticed.

What was really a concern to her were the black wolves she saw just before the darkness had overcome them. Surely they could smell her? She quickly fumbled in her pack and found what she sought: a bag of powdered hot pepper! She cast it about randomly, hoping to throw off their trail and made her way to where she had seen the secret door open earlier.

She came upon a warm pool on the rough floor. As she probed further, her blood went cold: it was Thurm! By his wounds it was clear she could not help the cleric. She recalled just the previous day he had saved her own life by healing her terrible burns. Suddenly, shooting pain lanced through her leg as a goblin spear pierced her. Instinctively, she stabbed upward and felt her sword sink deep. The vile creature slumped beside her.

Leaving her lifeless friend, she reluctantly continued. When she reached the secret door beyond the silence and darkness her spirit soared: Tabithias was waiting! She ran to the mage and, after securing the door behind them, the two fled down the passage. Still under the influence of the *darkvision* spell, Sarem led the pair and Tabithias, blind in the dark, stayed close. It was only a few moments before they heard the secret door crash open behind them. The shouts of goblins and terrifying snarls of the great wolves echoed up the passage.

'I'm out of spells, Sarem!' exclaimed the elf.

The halfling dropped a handful of caltrops behind her as they ran but she knew they could not hope to outrun their enemies. Arrows began to fly around them and the wolves closed in.



raid solely with a mind to acquire slaves and tend to view the prisoners as little more than booty.

Goblins are, quite possibly, the cruellest and most degenerate race in the realms. Often victims themselves, they take perverse delight in the torture and suffering of others. Considering the brutality with which they treat each other, it is easy to see the hopelessness of those in bondage to them. Slaves who are too old, too young or infirm are killed, often for sacrifice. As a way of keeping their prisoners alive and at the same time tormenting them, meat from slain prisoners is a staple of the slave diet. Faced with starving and being eaten themselves, most slaves opt for the grisly fare. As horrific as forced cannibalism is, it is not the only curse of a slave's life.

Male slaves labour, working 12 to 16 hours per day digging, farming or simply engaged in inane toil to amuse their captors. Females are considerably worse off. They perform domestic work under the supervision of cruel tribal females. Many among the slave women end up in brothel groups or as wet-nurses. Wet-nursing a group of goblin infants is horrid in the extreme. The young goblins inevitably kill and eat their wet nurse when they are weaned.

The priesthood requires frequent sacrificial victims and slaves are used when available. A healthy slave is preferable to a sick one because their torture and dying is more rewarding. When it is time to select a victim, the slaves themselves are often forced to choose which of their own will die. This process of waiting to be elected to die and feeding on those you have sent to death is another of the many aspects of captivity that drive many slaves to madness.

One of the most powerful forces driving the goblin tribe is its desire to avoid being subjugated itself. Many races use goblins as slaves and are ever on the lookout for more. An enormous amount of tribal energy, therefore, goes into remaining free of captivity. Goblin warriors and scouts are warned not to lead others to the tribe on pain of death. The warrens are usually extremely well hidden and defended. Still, whole tribes have relocated to avoid new bands of gnolls or hobgoblins in their area.

Goblins in captivity are a miserable lot. Luckily, goblins of any sort are a miserable lot so they tend to adapt. In slavery with larger humanoids, goblins often fare poorly unless they are kept separated. Due to their laziness, goblins are usually unproductive labourers. Under close supervision and fear of pain they will work but the effort often outweighs the gain. Therefore, the most common use of a goblin slave is still a foot soldier.

If a goblin is lucky enough to be conscripted into the army of an organised warlord, they will be armed and have a shield, maybe even armour. Unfortunately for the goblins, they most often end up in hobgoblin and orc armies, forced to take to the field with whatever they can find, or nothing at all. In this last situation, the goblins are purely used as cannon fodder and a diversion for the enemy. Faced with probable death at the hands of the enemy and their captors alike, goblins make unreliable soldiers at best. They will flee the battlefield or surrender if either option becomes available.

### Captivity and Escape

Goblin captivity is quite common in the realms and a great deal of tribal energy is expended avoiding it. Ironically, captive goblins rarely attempt to escape and are obedient, if lazy, servants so long as they are shown a strong hand. It is obvious this only makes them more desirable as slaves and feeds an already poor situation. Outsiders looking to understand this behaviour should consider the following:

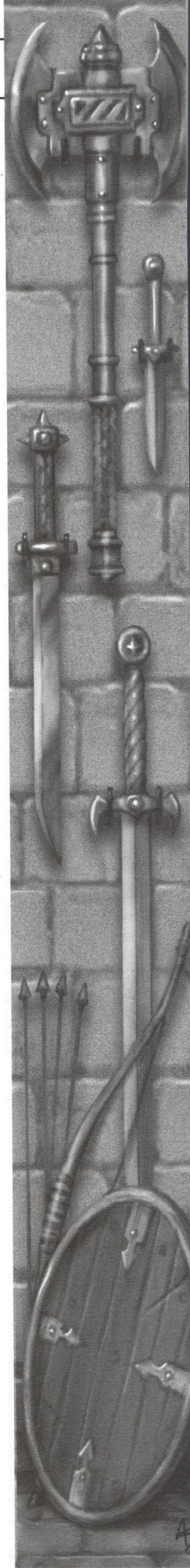
First, however bad the conditions of captivity are, they are rarely measurably worse than the average goblin's experiences in the warren. Each goblin has, since birth, faced hunger, unjust punishment and cruel abuse by those stronger than them. It matters little to the average goblin whether their oppressor is a fellow goblin or foul ogre. In either case, the goblin's chance of ending up in the stew pot for a minor infraction is comparable.

Secondly, a rebellion or escape plot is an act of co-operation. Unfortunately, goblins do not co-operate well without some (usually external) authority forcing them. A goblin who voices an escape plan to a comrade-in-chains is quite likely to find the same comrade has betrayed him to the captors in hopes of being rewarded with a raise in his own status.

### The Goblin Warren

Goblins can live nearly anywhere but will most often settle underground, far from large population centres. Although they are natural raiders and thieves, cities offer rewards only with great risk. Regardless of where they settle, a wide perimeter of pits, snares and ambush sites will be established immediately. It is also a prime concern for every tribe to camouflage the lair and make certain no tracks compromise its location. Torture and death await the goblin responsible for leading enemies home.

The warren itself is a criss-cross of passages, chambers and dead ends. The chaotic arrangements allow defenders to surround and disorient their enemies. Goblins are accomplished, if lazy, miners and given





## GOBLIN SOCIETY

time they can transform even a small cave into a sprawling lair. The average tunnel is dug too narrow and low for most larger races to enter, except on their bellies and without heavy armour. As with the surrounding area, passages and important chambers will be protected with pits, collapsing ceilings and other traps.

It has been said even an orc would feel dirty in a goblin cave. Whether this is true or not, the living conditions of the warren are legendary for their filth. Goblins seem to have no concept whatsoever of personal or communal hygiene. They can live in and among dung, half-eaten carcasses and other offal without issue and quickly despoil any area in which they reside.

Contrasted with this filth are the crude but prolific cave paintings that commonly adorn the walls of the warren.



These murals often tell stories of the tribe's exploits or represent religious themes. While not artistically interesting, when compared with the work of other races, these paintings stand in stark contrast to the perception of the goblin as a dull and brutal savage.

## RELIGION

Religion is an important aspect of goblin society and priests are feared. A goblin tribe often finds itself overmatched and in need of divine protection. Unfortunately, goblin gods are not a sympathetic lot and usually answer by calling for more blood and violence, often against the very foe the goblins sought protection from. Despite their indifference, goblins worship their gods out of fear. They recognise their true goblin nature in the gods' behaviour and it has shaped their culture.

Goblin worship requires frequent sacrifice and a great quantity of blood. Prisoners are sacrificed following a victory, before an important raid or to bless important events. If slaves are unavailable, substitutions are made from the weak in the tribe. Raging bonfires, feverish dancing and rhythmic drums characterise many ceremonies. It is not uncommon for several victims to be tortured in the early stages of a ritual, in order to stir the bloodlust of the tribe. Once again, if slaves are not available, the smallest goblins often fare poorly.

### The Mighty One

There are several gods in the goblin pantheon but none are as universally revered as The Mighty One. This violent deity appears as a massive, pure black goblin with burning eyes. Goblins and hobgoblins worship him, each race claiming to be first in the god's heart. The Mighty One is a brutal god who requires obedience and suffering from his worshippers. He hates all life and spurs his people on toward war and brutality.

The most holy day of The Mighty One is the night of the new moon. This night is always one of sordid revelry and unspeakable evil. Ironically, the daily occurrence of high noon is also holy to The Mighty One, who is sometimes called Fire Eyes and identified with the sun. The Mighty One demands regular sacrifice and many tribes practice daily noontime rituals. The deity prefers the blood of orcs, kobolds and gnomes but race will be overlooked if the sacrifice is brutal. He has long encouraged his priests to cull the weak of the tribe through sacrifice.



## THE GOBLIN SKULK

Masters of reconnaissance and ambush, skulks play a crucial role in goblin society. Usually encountered alone, they traverse tribal territory watching (and occasionally assassinating) enemies and positioning traps and ambush sites for the day an invader appears. The role of locating food and targets for raiding is left to lesser rogues or warriors in the tribe although skulks will sometimes help raiding parties' approach unnoticed and cover their retreat.

Skulks are respected, as their murderous traps and clever ambushes can save a tribe from ruin. When there are dangerous missions, such as poisoning an enemy well or counting orcs in a nearby tribe, the skulk gets the job. Consequently, losses are common among their numbers. While they live, however, they represent the best of their race and are among the most courageous goblins in the tribe.

Among goblin rogues, only the truly exceptional become skulks. The class is quite rare and even large tribes have only a small number of these specialists. The great danger keeps the number of skulks low.

**Hit Die:** d6

### Requirements

To become a skulk, a goblin must first fulfil all the following criteria:

**Abilities:** Dexterity 14, Intelligence 12 and Wisdom 12

**Feats:** Track

**Skills:** Craft (trapmaking) (5 Ranks); Hide (8 Ranks); Intuit Direction (5 Ranks); Move Silently (8 Ranks); Spot (8 Ranks) and Wilderness Lore (4 Ranks)

### Class Skills

The skulk's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int, trapmaker only), Disable Device (Int), Hide (Dex),

Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex) and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 3 + Int Modifier

### Class Features

All of the following are class features of the goblin skulk prestige class:

**Weapon and Armour Proficiencies:** A skulk is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and all armour though they tend to wear light armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour, equipment or loot carried.

**Ambush Mastery:** At 1st level, a skulk begins to master the techniques of ambush. A skulk that coordinates or creates an ambush grants a circumstance bonus to the Spot DC equal to his skulk level plus his Wisdom bonus. To get this bonus the skulk must make a Wilderness Lore check (DC 15). An ambush takes half an hour to prepare for every ambushing goblin. The skulk is also adept at spotting ambushes. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) will grant a +1 competence bonus to their spot check vs. ambushes (including natural traps such as pits, snares, etc.) per skulk level.

**Poison Use:** At 1st level, a skulk may use poison without the danger of accidental poisoning themselves. Skulks with the Alchemy skill gain a +2 competence bonus to make natural poison.

**Tracking Mastery:** At 2nd level, a skulk begins to perfect the art of tracking and avoiding trackers. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) every

#### The Skulk

Class Level	Base	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Ambush Mastery, Poison Use
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Tracking Mastery
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Cover and Concealment Mastery
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Lesser Surprise Mastery
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Greater Surprise Mastery





four hours allows the skulk to move at full speed while hiding their trail. Similarly, with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20), the first three creatures in a group with a skulk do not count toward the bonus given to trackers following the group. For each three points above the required role, three additional creatures are not counted.

The base DC penalty to track a group which includes a skulk is +1 per skulk level. Likewise, a skulk receives a +1 to their Wilderness Lore roll per skulk level to track creatures within 30 miles of their lair. With a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 25) every four hours, the skulk can move at full movement while tracking.

**Cover and Concealment Mastery:** At 3rd level, a goblin skulk has mastered the use of cover and concealment. Any time a skulk would be entitled to a cover or concealment bonus, that bonus is considered

one level higher than would be applied: 1/4 cover or concealment becomes 1/2, 1/2 becomes 3/4 and 3/4 becomes 9/10. A skulk with 9/10 cover or concealment gains no additional bonus.

**Surprise Mastery:** By the 4th and 5th levels, the skulk has become a master of surprise. At 4th level, a skulk can never be caught flatfooted and cannot be flanked or surprised. Conversely, when they surprise an enemy they receive a full rather than partial action. Skulks also gain a +2 on their initiative rolls following a surprise round in which they successfully surprise a foe. At 5th level, skulks gain a +2 competence bonus to attack rolls during a surprise round against surprised foes. Their critical threat range is also doubled on such attacks.

## GOBLIN SPELLS

### Blood Glyph

*Abjuration*

**Level:** Adp 2, Clr 1

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Area:** 5 sq. ft./level

**Duration:** Until discharged

**Saving Throw:** Fort half

**Spell Resistance:** No

Priests of The Mighty One use *blood glyph* to seal the tunnels of their warrens against invaders. A *blood glyph* protects an area, not an object.

The caster sets the conditions of the ward, limited to a pass phrase or simple set of physical characteristics ('Not a goblin or worg'). *Blood glyph* does not detect invisible or ethereal beings and multiple castings of the spell may not overlap. Casters may have a number of *blood glyphs* active equal to his caster level plus his Wisdom bonus, subsequent castings beyond this maximum fail.

*Blood glyphs* may not be affected or bypassed by physical or magical probing but may be dispelled. *Mislead*, *polymorph* and *nondetection* can fool a *blood glyph*. *Read magic* can identify the spell with a Spellcraft check (DC13). This identification does not discharge the ward and simply reveals its nature and any passwords or requirements to pass safely. Note: A rogue (only) may use Search (DC 26) to find the ward and Disable Device (DC 26) to disable it.



*Blood glyph* is activated when a creature enters the warded area without meeting the conditions set by the caster. The spell attacks the victim's blood vessels, causing them to burst with intense pain and deals 1d4+1 damage per level of caster (maximum of 6d4+6). All creatures within 5-ft. of the warded area are affected.

**Material Component:** The ritual requires humanoid blood sufficient to cover the warded area completely. The spell renders the blood into the nearly-invisible glyph that hovers in the air in the centre of the warded area, which radiates both magic and evil.

## Extinguish Light

*Abjuration*

**Level:** Adp 3, Clr 2

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 50-ft.

**Area:** 30-ft. radius

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

*Extinguish light* causes all non-magical light sources (torches, lanterns, campfires, etc.) in the target area to extinguish immediately. The spell also dispels light-producing spells or effects of the spell's level or lower that are in effect in the target area. Items with *light* or *continual flame* cast on them (*ever-burning torch*) are treated as spell effects for the purpose of *extinguish light*.

This spell may not be used to counter light-producing spells and normal fires extinguished by the spell can be relit normally.

**Note:** *extinguish light* does not produce magical darkness, it simply removes light from an area. Creatures with darkvision or low-light vision are not penalised by *extinguish light*.

## Vision of the Wolf

*Divination*

**Level:** Clr 3

**Components:** V, S, M, F

**Casting Time:** At least 8 hours (special)

**Range:** 10 mile radius + special

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

Casting *vision of the wolf* sends the caster a vision of the nearest worg and its location. Casting must begin on the night of the new moon and requires eight gruelling hours of ritual chanting, singing and dancing.

The caster must not be interrupted during the ritual.

If there is a worg within the range of the spell, the caster will receive a clear vision and unerringly know the location of the animal as well as how to get there. This knowledge lasts until the full moon.

If the spell does not locate a worg on the first night, the same caster may cast it again on following nights, to the limit of the caster's endurance. The caster must fast through the casting period and, due to the strenuous ritual, attempts to cast the spell on more than one day require a CON check (DC 15) at -1 per subsequent day of casting. With each casting, ten miles are added to the radius of the spell.

**Focus:** The caster must be dressed in the head and fur of a wolf to cast the spell, although not necessarily that of a worg. If the actual skull or pelt of a worg is used, double the base radius of the spell. A fire pit of at least 3' diameter is also required as a focus for the ritual. The fire must burn for the length of the ritual, which may span days. The final vision appears to the caster in the flames of the fire.

**Material Component:** One live humanoid sacrifice for each night the spell has been cast. For each additional sacrifice offered during the ritual but not required, five miles are added to the range of the spell.

**Note:** This spell does not ensure the worg's favour, nor does it guarantee the creature is not already allied with another tribe.

## Child of the Mighty One

*Transmutation*

**Level:** Adp 4, Clr 4

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 minute per subject

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** 2 Creatures per caster level

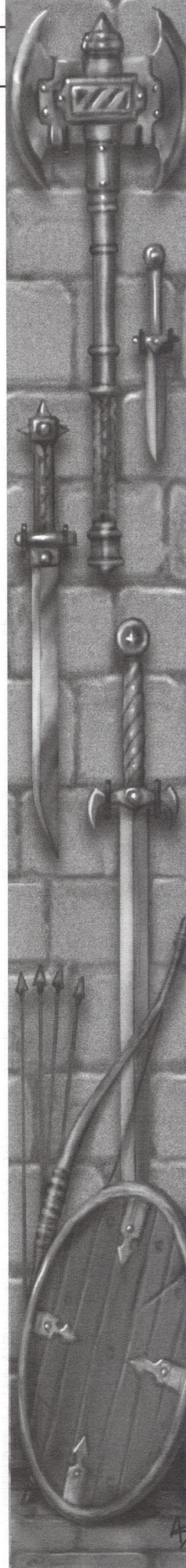
**Duration:** 1 day per caster level or until discharged

**Saving throw:** Will negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

Casting *child of The Mighty One* is a bloody ritual often preceding a major raid or battle. When cast, the subject is marked by the caster with a bloody sigil persisting one day per caster level unless voluntarily discharged by the subject. When discharged, the subject is overcome by blood frenzy exactly like that of the barbarian's rage ability as described in *Core Rulebook I*.

**Material Component:** One live humanoid must be sacrificed for every subject blessed by this spell. The blood of the sacrifice is used to mark the subject.





# METHODS OF WARFARE

Goblins have been at war since their creation, lost in the mists of time. The priesthood of The Mighty One is unrelenting in its call for new victims for sacrifice and its demand the tribe multiplies and slays its enemies. A goblin warren that is not raiding is often eating itself from the

inside and mired in discontent. Knowing this and needing to protect their reign, the chieftain sends his warriors out, driven by the inflammatory rhetoric of the priests.

Goblins are both intelligent and cunning, challenging enemies more than they are often given credit for. They are racially and culturally prepared to survive by preying on the weak and their tactics focus on stealth and overwhelming numbers. They understand they are rarely superior to their enemies and thus rely heavily on great numbers, ingenuity and preparation to succeed.



## GOBLIN UNIT OVERVIEW

### Scouts

The scout/rogue plays a critical role in goblin society. Always alert for new enemies in the tribal territory, they also locate new food sources and gather information on targets for raiding warriors. When goblins do strike, scouts are rarely among them, having moved on to prepare the next target. Scouts might be used, at times, to perform special tasks. For instance, raiders assaulting a town may have a small group of scouts sneak in to gather prisoners and loot for the warren.

Another common mission of the scout is the poisoning of wells and livestock of a potential target and burning crops and warehouses. These actions may happen days before a raid, ensuring the defenders will be sick and weak. The elite goblin scouts, known as skulks, may lead these special operations but are never involved in battles. Instead they busy themselves preparing traps and co-ordinating ambush sites along the path of returning raiders.

### Warriors and Archers

The largest percentage of a raiding force will be warriors. These rank-and-file males are well acquainted with violence and are generally effective combatants, especially in groups. It would be a mistake to assume they forsake their stealthy heritage to take up arms. Rather, they maximise their threat by approaching unseen and unheard, swarming opponents only to fade back into cover, usually to a prepared ambush site.

Many tribes also have dedicated archers. When present, these units can have a dramatic impact



on the battle. Arrow storms cover the advance and retreat of warriors while other archers wait in ambush for pursuing enemies.

### Wolves, Worg and Cavalry

Wolves, dire wolves and the cruelly-intelligent worg are common sights on the battlefield, fighting beside their goblin allies. The presence of these beasts is often enough to terrify even hardened soldiers, granting the goblins a tremendous advantage on the field. Without riders, the great wolves often run haphazardly around the battlefield, bringing chaos, fear and death while their allies push through the confused and weakened enemy.

As feared as they are on their own, worg-mounted cavalry are one of the most feared units in the realms. These warriors are expert riders who have grown more brutal and sadistic through their close association with the evil wolves. When they charge into battle, only the most disciplined enemy is not scattered.

### Leaders

Most raids will have one or more sergeants in command, with lieutenants commanding only the largest actions. The dual purpose of a unit leader in combat is to inspire courage in the troops, allowing retreat only when it leads to strategic advantage and to make decisions related to the goals of the raid. Without strong leadership even experienced warriors tend to deteriorate into a mob and excessive violence, looting and destruction often result. Good

leaders understand the tribe can milk a village and its environs for months or years unless powerful retribution comes as the result of too zealous an assault.

### The Priesthood

In combat, adepts and priests alike counter light sources and sow fear, disease and disorder. Their versatility assures even moderate-sized raids will contain at least one priest or adept. On the battlefield, priests are also fond of summoning reinforcements to their side, often zombies from the corpses of slain enemies. The impact of seeing their comrades' dead bodies advancing on them helps spread terror in the ranks of the goblins' enemies.

## GOBLIN EQUIPMENT

Goblin equipment is a mismatched collection of stolen or crudely-fashioned items. Tribes have no industry and make only the simplest items. Rather than create, goblins rely on theft and salvage for most of their needs. Because gnomes share both habitat and size, goblins are often found in the gear of these good beings. Whatever goblins possess, it is normally dirty and neglected.

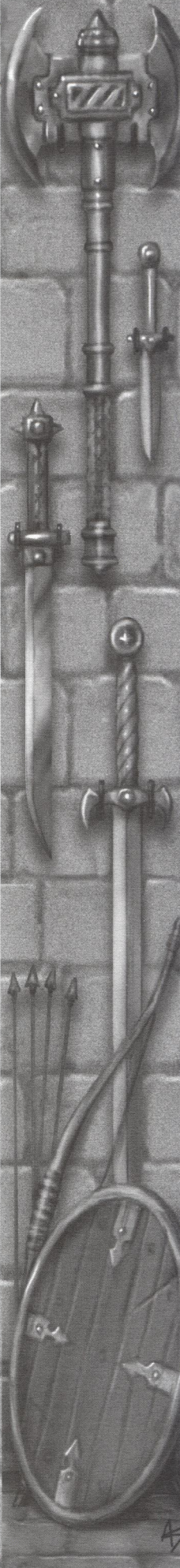
The battleaxe, sacred to The Mighty One, is favoured by goblins but still rare where it is not common to the people in the raiding territory. Morningstars and short swords are much more common, the former being easily fashioned and the latter universally available. Warriors tend to use small-scale weapons

The cleric and fighter ducked behind the cover of logs. Although the dwarf had several arrows protruding from his armour, none had managed to penetrate. He and the cleric had exchanged fire with an unknown number of goblins hidden among the trees as the mage counted and located the enemy. When she was ready she signalled her friends, hoping the halfling was in place. The cleric and the elven mage rose and let fly their spells. She loosed a volley of *magic missiles* into the thick underbrush where they found three of the archers. Thurm summoned an enormous badger to charge those holding the tree line.

Several of the creatures turned to flee and the dwarf's crossbow went to work on the exposed enemy. The halfling rogue emerged, seemingly from nowhere, to cut down a pair of the monsters. The survivors broke ranks and fled as a mob through the thick trees, the heroes in pursuit. It was not long before the rogue and badger, leading the pursuit, crashed through the forest floor into a concealed pit. The fleeing goblins took prepared places behind logs and turned on the surprised fighter, mage and cleric cresting a hillock.

A dozen or more new goblins rose from concealed positions and launched a rain of arrows, sending the heroes diving for cover. As Tabithias began conjuring an obscuring cloud to shield them, Korl brought his crossbow to bear again. 'Lookout!' cried Thurm but it was too late. More arrows, now flaming, had pierced several bladders of oil camouflaged among the trees where the heroes crouched. The explosion interrupted the elf's spell and the three of them were engulfed in fire and reduced to rolling among the leaves to dampen the flames. They heard the battle cry of the charging warriors and noticed the pit that held Sarem was a raging inferno.

'OK,' spat the elf, preparing her *fireball*, 'let's see how they like this...'







that allow the addition of a crude wooden shield while leaders often forego a shield and wield normal-scale weapons with two hands. Javelins are in common use as an easily-fashioned ranged weapon and many tribes also make use of shortbows, light crossbows or slings for ranged attacks. Archer units will likely wield bows over other options. Tribes with access to alchemist fire or tanglefoot bags will make intelligent and effective use of these.

Most goblins wear leather or studded leather armour, favouring the mobility and stealth it allows. Many leaders have been encountered wearing masterwork or even magical armour. On the opposite end of the spectrum are reports of waves of naked goblins armed with only clubs, sharp rocks or sticks. If such reports are true, these goblins were certainly first wave forces driven by hobgoblin or other captors.

## WARS, RAIDS AND AMBUSHES

There is an enduring image of the goblin horde. Although goblin tribes can exceed two or even four hundred combatants, this force is almost never gathered for combined action. The average tribe lacks the depth of leadership to effectively command such a force. Large units are also more difficult to conceal and large goblin forces tend to bring organised

### Worgs And Goblins

When goblins migrated to the surface so many years ago, they turned to the priesthood for answers. Were they not the chosen of The Mighty One? Were they not destined to defeat all His enemies? How then were they driven from their deep homes? The priests beseeched their dark god day and night for answers to these questions and for guidance, spilling the blood of many humanoid prisoners in dark rituals to regain the favour of their patron.

Goblin folklore maintains that shortly thereafter, dire wolves imbued with evil and intelligence began to contact tribes everywhere. The priests explained these beasts had been given the spirits of the bravest and most bloodthirsty goblin warriors and called them worg, which is sometimes translated '*goblin spirit*'. The relationship between the two races has grown ever since.

So dependent are the goblins on the great wolves, they have developed powerful magic to locate them. Once they have located a worg, the tribe mounts an expedition to make contact with the wolves and convince them to join the tribe. The worg are inclined to these relationships so these missions rarely fail. There are times, however, when a rival tribe has already made a pact with the great wolf. The worg remain neutral and cast their lot in with the side that proves the victor, dining on the loser.



response from civilised societies. So rather than armies, goblins operate in raiding bands that rarely reach one hundred warriors.

Their small size makes the race well suited to combat in restricted spaces such as underground and in deep woods. Their darkvision and incredible natural stealth combine to deadly effect. Many a night massacre in a wilderness border town has been blamed on the goblin. Where the race truly excels, however, is with small, fast raids against undefended or lightly defended targets and ambushes or guerrilla raids against a larger force whom they often watch for days before striking.

Goblins use ambushes both as positions to attack from, such as when targeting a caravan route, and as defensive positions to cover retreating warriors or guard a warren. Generally there are numerous pits in the vicinity of an ambush site, lined with sharp sticks, expertly concealed. Ambushes are often designed so an initial attack from the front of an enemy drives them back into a larger, secondary strike.

There is no such thing as a typical goblin raid, or battle plan. Such predictability would soon give the goblins' foes the advantage. Rather, their actions run the full gamut of purpose and execution making them extremely difficult to counter. The creatures show an extraordinary gift for remaining unpredictable and

striking with surprise. Other than the fact goblins often strike at night, there is little else to aid those who would stop their aggression. In many border towns, every night becomes a tense and watchful ordeal.

## THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

Goblins have been enslaved for millennia by those more powerful than themselves. Some of these creatures, such as the warlike hobgoblins or powerful wizards, may gather goblins together in numbers far exceeding the natural inclination of the race. It is here we get the classic goblin horde but, in truth, these armies fight in a manner so unfitting the race that they should hardly be called 'goblin' at all. In such large numbers, tactics invariably resort to waves of warriors pushed forward as a mob by cruel leaders, hoping to overwhelm their enemy by sheer numbers.

On very rare occasions, goblins may be found in the armies of evil masters powerful enough to direct them effectively. It is here the race may become its most fearsome. Vast numbers of goblins, vicious and bloodthirsty, directed according to a solid battle plan can accomplish nearly any task. Luckily, most who enslave the race use it as fodder and carelessly expend goblin lives to soften an enemy.

Arrows zipped passed them frequently now as they rushed down the black tunnel. One had struck the halfling and though she was hurt, she still led the elf. Even so, the pair hurried, knowing the goblins would show no mercy to the two women. Tabithias, the mage, imagined the hot breath of the black wolves on her legs and her fear grew. Would this passage never end?

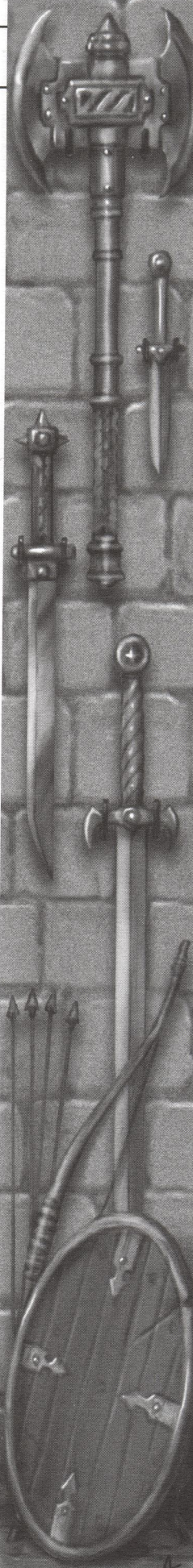
At that moment, the floor collapsed under Sarem and the rogue fell with a shriek that was cut off quickly. The elf stopped and did not join her friend but she was blind in the dark. She felt around but could not find a way around the pit and knew not how wide it was. Helpless, overcome by fear, for the first time in her long life, she despaired. After her many adventures, she was to die at the hands of mere goblins.

A moment later, she sensed her enemies within a few feet. She could smell their vile stench and hear the heavy panting of the evil worg. 'Pretty, pretty elf,' came a guttural voice in the dark. The goblin spoke broken common. A crowd of harsh voices followed the words with evil laughter.

'Yes, a juicy elf... A tasty girl...' came another voice. 'You kill Tikar. We kill you friends, we make feast with you now for new chief.'

'But first we make game with pretty elf, Brull,' came the first voice more forcefully. 'Make fun with pretty elf and keep it alive for long time?'

The elf heard all this as if she were far away. She wished they had heeded the old priest and never come. With her remaining will she rose and threw herself across the open pit, no longer caring if she made it.





# ROLE-PLAYING WITH GOBLINS

**F**ar from mindless enemies waiting for adventurers in dungeon rooms, goblins have a fascinating culture and personality which, if used properly, can add life and dimension to your games. Through reading this work you have been equipped with a wealth of knowledge on goblins' society, motivations and their method of warfare. The purpose of this section is to help the Games Master combine these various elements into a consistent whole. When goblins are presented in the game world as unique creatures, distinct from larger goblinoids and other humanoids, everyone playing the game benefits from the added richness.

## PORTRAYING GOBLINS

Goblins are brutal beings, showing no mercy to each other or the universe around them. Their excessive violence and blood revelry have earned them a permanent place in the imagination of the common folk. This trait must not be underplayed in order to portray the race properly. Goblins are experts at terror and understand a community's vulnerability is its women and young. Do not have goblins simply raid a town. Let them brutalise it in the most sordid ways you can imagine. Remember, however, goblin raids will be quick and stealthy. Only a few homes in a targeted town might ever know of an attack.

With conditions against them, goblins will always flee and regroup. If unable to hide or evade a foe, goblins soon degenerate into cowardice and treachery. They may surrender, begging mercy or switch sides entirely. Some have even revealed the warren location to save their life or gain favour with their new master. This trait has given rise to the popular image of the 'snivelling goblin'. Their voice, already pitched high, becomes more annoying when they resort to such desperate and obsequious behaviour.

Remember, goblins are controlled by a fearful paranoia and may behave irrationally at times. For instance, if one goblin should flee a battle but others remain and prevail, the coward's life is forfeit for the show of weakness. A group could, therefore, exhibit uncharacteristic bravery, knowing their own kind are as likely to kill them as the enemy.

## ENCOUNTERS WITH GOBLINOIDS

Goblins are rarely found in groups of less than five. They are eminently aware of their weaknesses and groups bolster their strength and confidence. They are the quintessential tribal being and uncomfortable when alone. Encounters with lone goblins will invariably be with a skulk, observing from a hidden location and fleeing if spotted. Unlike other humanoids, goblins seldom make trading or informant relationships with non-goblins.

Goblins are typically encountered in hunting, raiding or patrol parties. Remember, they will always observe before attacking and are masters of the trap, ambush and misdirection. They will flee if hard pressed, harassing enemies with missile fire from cover or darkness. Leave players with the impression of an enemy always striking where least expected and retreating to stronger ground.

The presence of the worg will drastically alter goblins' aggression. The great wolves might press for attack, to satiate their bloodlust, even if circumstances are not ideal for the goblins. Goblin cavalry, adapted to their fierce mounts, are a savage and terrifying enemy.

The warren is the ultimate challenge for the goblin slayer. It will be expertly hidden, well patrolled and protected for miles by pitfalls, ambush sites and other traps and tricks. It is here the goblin essence will emerge, driven by mad priests and sub-chiefs to defend the tribe. Only the very powerful should ever enter a goblin warren and none will emerge unscathed. The tunnels are designed for defence, the warriors are rabid with violence and the leaders are ready to expend any number of lives to repel an invader.



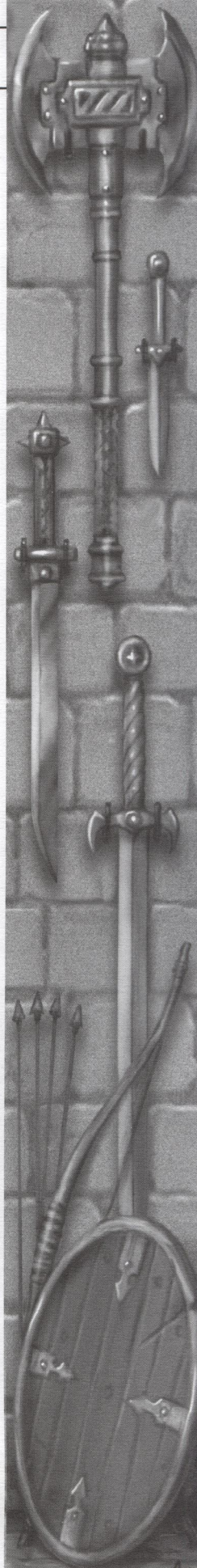
# SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

**B**elow are several short hooks for use as seeds in your goblin storylines. A Games Master, armed with the information in this book should be able to elevate the goblin above a simple, faceless creature hitherto thrown half-heartedly at low-level characters. These intelligent and cunning creatures have the capability to hamper characters well beyond their challenge rating suggests. With the addition of worg allies and high-level leaders, they can prove a suitable annoyance for characters into moderately high levels. In fact, nothing may be more satisfying than introducing 'just goblins' and watching the player's faces turn to surprise and then horror as they reassess long-held preconceptions.

## NEVER SEEN THAT IN A GOBLIN BEFORE

A powerful but mad wizard has been experimenting on a local goblin population. He pays the chief well for his co-operation and offers the tribe protection from some of their more powerful enemies. Over the last decade the tribe has relocated behind his walls and he has, through the use of demonic allies, bred several half-fiends from goblins and worg. The first have come to maturity and more than a dozen more are maturing. The mage has also imbued the blood of goblins and worg foetuses with the essence of pure evil, breeding a new race of fiendish goblins and worgs to serve him. Several of these horrid creations he has instructed in the magical arts and many others have become skilled warriors. There is now a formidable contingent of monsters in his dark keep and his work continues.

All would be well for this wicked madman if it were not for the reports coming from travellers in the area telling of strange flying beasts. What is worse, the creatures have of late begun to attack travellers, spreading the fear even wider. Clearly something must be done and the players are hired to investigate the stories and the attacks.





## HERE THEY ARE, GET THEM

About a week ago, an anonymous tipster slipped several papers under the door of the meetinghouse of a large town. The papers contained a very crude map of the wilderness around the town with two areas circled. Accompanying the map was a poorly written note in common claiming the map led not only to the bugbear raiders plaguing the farmers of the area but also to the new home of some hobgoblins who had moved into the area. Scouts have confirmed the presence of the humanoids at the marked location and the players are hired to put a stop to both groups.

In reality, rogues in a local goblin tribe planted the papers. It is the goblin tribe, not the other two groups, who are responsible for the town's problems. They hope to remove their competition and at the same time protect their scouts and raiding parties

from destruction at the hands of the powerful hobgoblins. Feel free to help the players discern the true nature of the enemy during the adventure, perhaps by interviewing raid victims or examining sites where they might find clues leading to goblins, not bugbears. Better yet, let them eliminate both threats only to give the goblins a free hand in the area!

## ATTACK!

The party is hired to escort a caravan along a well-travelled, well-patrolled route. Half way along the route the caravan stops at the usual watering hole: a large, lonely inn crowded with travellers and merchants. The party's caravan train arranges its wagons in a field with those of other caravans and the characters pitch their tents with the other caravan guards. The merchants rent rooms for the night. Late the same night, a horseman rides into the courtyard, waking everyone, yelling. 'Goblins are swarming near the swamp! They are coming this way!' The players must quickly form a defence strategy using the wagons and buildings of the inn. There should be several low-level warriors available (guards from other caravans) but most of those present should be treated as non-combatants. The goblin force should include wolf-riders and archers as well as foot soldiers. Match the size of the force to challenge the characters.

No one knows what caused the goblins to swarm, as such large, direct assaults are rare but this scenario will allow the Games Master to make full use of the goblin battle tactics presented in this book. Perhaps a follow-up adventure with information gained from prisoners will identify the cause of the attack and lead to an attack on the warren?

## KIDS IN A CANDY STORE

Recently, friends visiting a powerful wizard were surprised to be ambushed by goblins apparently in control of his tower. How this happened is unknown and the tower is guarded against scrying so little can be learned. Whatever the cause, these creatures *must not* be allowed to remain in the tower. If they should gain mastery of the powerful items of the old wizard the whole area would suffer dire consequences.





In truth, the old wizard died of natural causes and the goblins happened upon the tower. A powerful wizard among their number has indeed laid claim to some magic and declared himself the new tribal chief. He is still gathering his strength but it will not be long before he strikes at the villages around the tower. A local mage guild offers to finance the recapture effort so long as the magic inside becomes its property. The Games Master should allow level-appropriate items to fall into the hands of the party but use the guild's stipulation to balance the treasure and prevent the party from unbalancing the campaign. The guild may even know the items it seeks.

any step and always remember, these creatures will not stand idly by as the players move from room to room, slaying and collecting treasure. They will retreat, circle back and lead the adventurers toward dead ends and traps. Remember to hamper the party with corridors too small for an armoured man and guerrilla archer strikes.

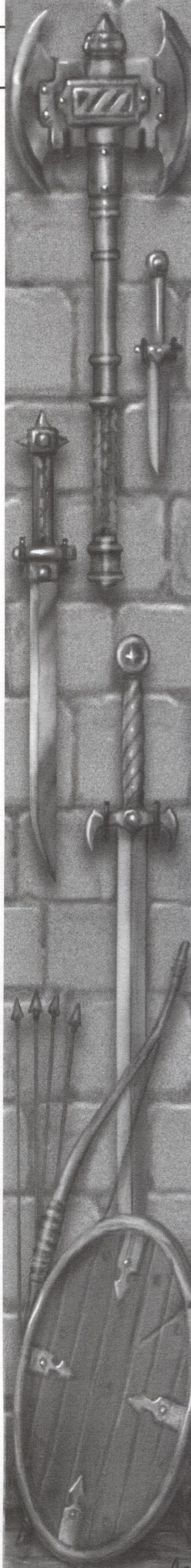
The warren should represent the height of the goblins' cunning. It should challenge even the most hardened party and spell a quick doom to those less prepared.

## GOBLINTOWN

A remote border town has been infiltrated by goblins. Many of the leading citizens have had loved ones captured and held hostage. The largest merchants pay a third of their shipments as tribute to the goblin chief residing in the hills. For this payment each caravan is escorted through the surrounding orc country by a contingent of wolf riders. The town justifies this by pointing out the orcs would take all their goods; the goblins take only a third. Players may be introduced by coming upon one of these strange caravans or by stories from the nearest trading town. These stories either speak of the strange caravan guards or tell of their own caravans being unable to get through due to orc or goblin activity. Although the townsfolk want to be rescued they live in fear of saying too much because of their loved ones' safety. The town has a moderate force of goblins as well as several well-placed spies on the lookout for 'meddling outsiders'. Putting an end to this threat by going after the chief could lead into Warren Sweet Warren below.

## WARREN SWEET WARREN

The classic dungeon crawl! Scouts have located an entrance to the goblin warren at great cost. The players are hired to clean it out for a great reward. This scenario will allow the Games Master to make use of the tactics and defences mentioned in this book as well as infuse the warren with delicious hints of goblin culture. Before the players even reach the warren they will encounter ambushes, traps and tricks. Do not make it easy for them at





# THE TORN HEADS WARREN

The Torn Heads grew out of a large goblin tribe living for decades in the cliffs at the mouth of a mountain pass. Early in the tribe's history, a great dragon subjugated it and many of the goblins were relocated to serve in the dragon's den. A contingent of hobgoblins was placed over the remainder of the tribe to ensure consistent productivity and tribute. Finally, however, powerful adventurers tracked the dragon to her lair. Though they gravely wounded her, they were all slain in the attack. Rather than aid the dragon, an opportunistic hobgoblin drove scores of doomed goblins at the beast to finish her.

Word of the events reached the goblin warren quickly. The new chief recalled many of the hobgoblins to the dragon's den. A young goblin scout, named Drek, saw an opportunity for freedom in the confusion. He persuaded several worg males and many warriors to join him. They defeated the remaining hobgoblins and, taking the few females they could, fled across the wide valley toward the mountains beyond.

When they reached the mountains, scouts located a suitable lair. Unfortunately, a tribe of orcs occupied it. Unlike many chiefs, Drek fought the more powerful foe for the rich territory. For several weeks, his scouts, warriors and cavalry ambushed random patrols, hunting and raiding parties with great success. When the orcs launched a major search for

the invaders, Drek's warriors slipped into the lightly-defended lair and massacred the orcs. Returning raiders, faced with a grisly, orc-head tower at the entrance, chose to abandon the area. Thus Drek's tribe earned its home and name on the same day.

## THE TORN HEADS TODAY

It has been more than two years since the tribe established itself in the orc caves. They have worked hard to make them more defensible. The few females from the original warren have already produced almost 60 young for the tribe. The area within 20 miles has been cleared of enemies and the warriors have carefully spread their raids over a wide area to divert attention. Ironically, they now prey on trade routes made popular by those wishing to avoid the dragon they once served.

The Torn Heads appears to have a bright future. The tribe's exceptional leader is not without enemies, however, and the tribe shows the natural dissension common to all tribes. Some powerful goblins are critical of Drek's slow and cautious approach and favour a freer hand in the area. The grumbling has not become rebellion but the tribe may change leaders soon if Drek does not show more aggression. Increased aggression, of course, could bring a strong response and may destroy the young tribe.

## USING THE WARREN

The Torn Heads is an example of a warren Game Masters can drop into their campaigns with minimum preparation. In many ways, the tribal structure, the lair, traps and tactics are typical of goblins anywhere. There are several peculiarities, however, about this tribe. Since many of the best males migrated with Drek, there is a high percentage of classed goblins in the tribe. Taken with the defensibility of the caves, this could be a deadly combination. Drek himself is unusual, having learned from his hobgoblin overlords. His strong grasp of strategy and extended planning make him a doubly-dangerous opponent.

The warren should prove an excellent source of adventure for a mid-level party. The tribe could be the focus of several low-level adventures, including several of the hooks mentioned in this book, allowing characters to build experience and confidence before assaulting the warren itself. Players will find the caves an above-average challenge. The warren is

### Tribal Structure

See the reference list for statistics for the following:

Non-combatants 57 Young/23 Females  
120 warriors (30 archers/90 warriors)  
8 cavalry  
16 scouts (rogues)  
6 priests (4 shamans/2 priests)  
8 leaders (6 sergeants/2 lieutenants)  
Drek, chief  
12 worg (as described in *Core Rulebook III*)



well hidden and the surrounding area is heavily patrolled. The Torn Heads are a deadly challenge and can be overcome only with persistence and careful preparation.

## Getting There

Game Masters are encouraged to make locating and travelling to the warren a challenge. The goblins have been especially careful to raid a wide area, leaving few survivors. It should be difficult to determine the location of the lair or guess the site of the next raid. If characters locate a fresh trail from a raided caravan or village, they may follow it into the hills but will likely encounter at least one ambush by warriors left behind to discourage such tracking. The area closer to the lair is aggressively patrolled and dotted with traps and ambush sites. The goblins are on their own land and are masters of this scenario. The extent of their preparation and cunning should be obvious to the players from the first ambush.

## Features

**River:** A mountain stream flows directly by the goblin hill system, into and under the caves. From the outside, an observer notices a mossy cave mouth by a pool at the (apparent) end of the stream. If investigated, it will be discovered to be a tunnel into the goblin caves, crossing a corridor and ending in a pool in the main living area. The water path into the caves is guarded as detailed in area 13.

**Small Corridors:** Several corridors (grey on the map) were cut smaller and more jaggedly than the rest. Large (and Medium creatures in heavy armour) may not enter these tunnels. Medium creatures in the tunnels move at half speed and only Small weapons may be employed unless they pierce.

**Mapping:** Faced with a moving enemy attacking from all sides it is unlikely characters will be able to map. If not, they should become disoriented and Game Masters should exploit the confusion to the defenders advantage. Intuit Direction may help find north but will not help them navigate the twisting corridors.

**Blood Ward:** The Game Master is encouraged to place *blood wards* (see new spells) throughout the warren. Each shaman can maintain three wards and each priest may have six. These wards should also be placed in the area surrounding the warren and can be used as part of an effective ambush.

**Spiked Pit Trap (20ft. Deep):** ('Boxed X' on the map) CR2; No attack roll needed (2d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 damage per spike); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC22); Disable Device (DC 20). The warren floor is covered in a 2-3 inch layer of sand, brush and skins making it difficult to spot all pits and floor traps. A +2 circumstance bonus has been added to them to reflect this.

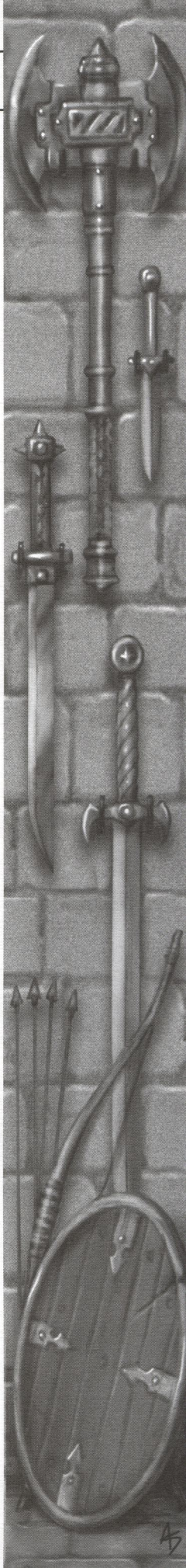
**Collapsing Ceiling Trap:** (Marked 'T' on the map) CR: 5; +15 Melee (5d6/x2 critical); Reflex save (DC 15) half; Search (DC 25) ceiling outside the room, Search (DC 27) floor in room; Disable Device (DC 25). Trap must be reset, taking 2d6 hours and eight goblins. Characters detecting the trap in the hall ceiling will notice only a weak ceiling. Characters placing more than 100 lbs. of weight on the trigger square will cause the ceiling to collapse outside the trapped room and fill the hall with impenetrable rubble. The trap attacks all creatures in the two squares outside the room, pinning them. Pinned characters and those trapped in the room may be dug out as per *Core Rulebook II*.

**Vermin:** The cave complex is alive with rats, centipedes, beetles and spiders of various sizes. 2d6 of these creatures inhabit nearly every room. Most of these creatures will not attack if left alone but the Game Master should feel free to use them as combat encounters if the players require additional challenges.

**Filth:** The entire lair reeks of goblin filth. The stench has no game effect but Game Masters should mention it frequently. Heroes returning home may find themselves replacing clothes, reeking of foul goblin. Disease also lurks in warren. Goblins are largely unaffected but characters have a cumulative 1% chance per hour of exposure to contract filth fever (as per *Core Rulebook II*), Fortitude save (DC 12). Game Masters should increase this chance if characters spend a great deal of time poking around in the goblin's belongings.

## TACTICS

Drek's goblins, encountered in the wilderness, will avoid contact if possible, sizing up their opponents. One or more runners may be dispatched to the warren if trespassers appear well equipped or headed for the lair. If time allows, goblins will prepare an ambush. After striking with surprise they will retreat toward a prepared trap or ambush site. As a







## THE TORN HEADS WARREN

last resort, they will split into small guerrilla bands and harass the enemy with missile fire, retreating to where another group lies in wait. They will head to the warren only once they have repelled an enemy and will avoid leading others to the lair.

In the lair, defenders will fall back from invaders, fighting to slow progress and allow for ambush or for allies to achieve flanking positions. Females and young will be evacuated at the first sign of danger. The tribe's wolves are its first line of defence and they will attack fiercely, hoping to intimidate, overrun or force invaders away. Failing a quick victory, warriors will take to the tunnels, harassing enemies with missile fire and using the natural bottleneck of the smaller tunnels to slow them. If the situation becomes dire, warriors will attack directly while leaders prepare a better plan or retreat from the warren entirely.

If goblins spot adventurers in the area, Drek will cease all raiding for several weeks to wait out the invaders. This waiting will increase the tension between Drek and his rivals in the tribe and is not a permanent solution. If desperate, Drek will arrange a raid and the capture of one of his scouts. The scout will trade information for freedom, pointing his captors to across the valley, to the original warren.

## THE WARRENS

**1 Entrance (EL 1):** The warren entrance is expertly concealed, Spot (DC 15) within 100 yards, +5 DC for each 20 additional yards. Four guards are here day or night and are relatively diligent in their duty. The cave mouth opens into a small room strewn with a few furs and a small fire pit (rarely used).

**Tactics:** These guards retreat immediately from a superior foe through the small corridor in the north and rouse the wolves.

**2 Worg Lair (EL Varies, 7+):** The tribe's worg allies occupy this room, filled with bones and old furs. There are 1d12 worg here at any time, the rest being on patrol or a raid.

**Tactics:** The wolves will attack fiercely and without provocation, even pursuing a fleeing enemy. If cavalry warriors from area 3 are present the wolves will often defer to their judgement.

**3 Cavalry Warriors Cave (EL Varies, 2+):** This room is strewn with old bones, unfinished meals and old furs. A rough wooden table and stump chairs provide a sense of furnishing. There will be 1d8 cavalry warriors here, the rest being on patrol with the worg. Females (1d2), belonging to the cavalry, are also present.

**Tactics:** These warriors will fight but will seek a way to call or retreat to their worg or involve reinforcements from area 4.

**4 Rogues (Scouts) Cave (EL Varies, 2+):** The rogues of the tribe are housed here and 1d12 are present at any time. The room is strewn with large boulders, furs (for sleeping) and other clutter. Females (1d2), belonging to the scouts will also be present.

**Tactics:** It is difficult to approach this room unheard, as the rogues are extremely aware. They will prepare an ambush if time allows and use their sneak attack. The rogues carry tanglefoot bags and will use them.

**5 Guard Room (EL Varies, 1+):** Warriors (1d4) inhabit both of these sparse rooms; double if intruders are expected. An old shield hangs from a hook in the wall for use as a warning gong.

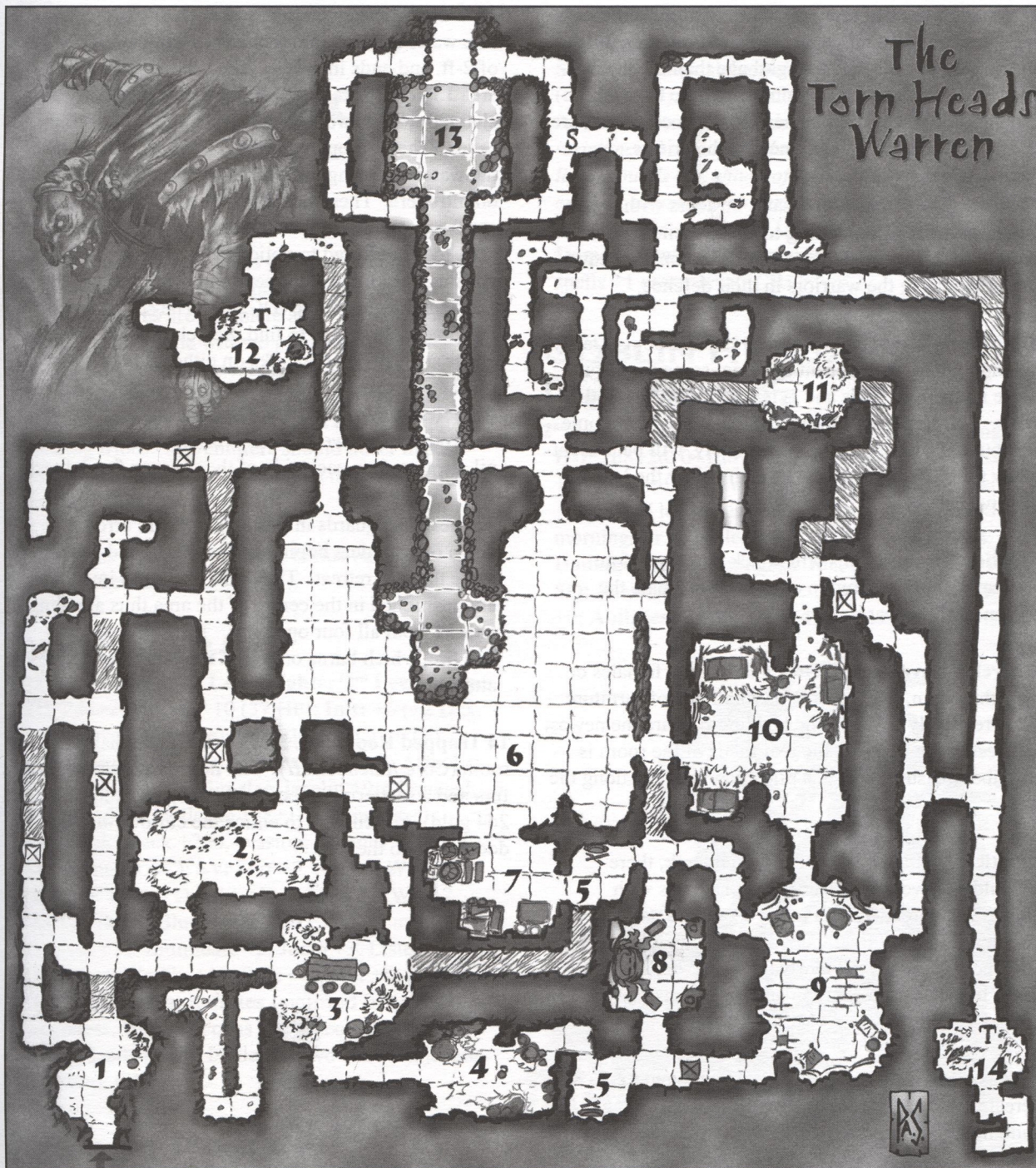
**Tactics:** These guards will sound the alarm and attack, fleeing to area 6 or 10 to warn the tribe if pressed.

**6 Common Cave (EL Varies, 3+):** This huge chamber holds the majority of the tribe. It is strewn with filth, bedding and half-eaten meals. At any time there will be 6d10+6 warriors present. The tribe's females and young not found elsewhere will also be present unless evacuated.

**Tactics:** If significant time has passed since characters entered the caves the females and young will have evacuated leaving only the warriors who have made a ready defence. This room is the most likely place for defenders to be confronted directly in a pitched battle. The goblins here will make the most of their superior numbers, using the multiple entrances to surround the invaders.

**7 Storeroom:** This room holds barrels of water, dry foodstuffs and items the tribe has stolen in caravan raids. The Games Master should stock the room with any items deemed reasonable (silk, wool, spices)





keeping in mind that all true treasure is stored in Drek's cave. This room is also where prisoners are kept. Presently there are three gnomes and a dwarf; all miners captured several weeks ago, bound here. They are in poor condition and await sacrifice to The Mighty One having watched several friends dragged to the same fate.

**8 Chapel to The Mighty One:** A simple stone obelisk occupies the centre of this room, inscribed with runes praising The Mighty One. There is also a stone table, stained black with blood and several instruments used in the performance of sacrifice. Two large, stone basins hold large quantities of dark blood, attracting insects and filling the room with a foul stench noticeable even over the odour of the goblins.





## THE TORN HEADS WARREN

**9 Priests Cave (EL 12):** This room is furnished in relative splendour, having well-maintained bedding, bits of furniture from raids and less garbage than other caves. The tribal priests make a communal home here and shamans and priests will be here at all times. There are also 1d2+1 females here, owned by the priests.

**Tactics:** The priests will assault invaders with spells and alchemist's fire, hoping to shake their resolve before making a quick retreat to the communal cave and supporting the warriors in their defence.

**10 Leader's Cave (EL Varies, 5+):** This room is fairly well appointed, with decent bedding, some small furniture items from raids and is much cleaner than other caves. The sergeants and lieutenants make their home here but only 1d6 and 1d2, respectively, will be present at any time. Females (1d2+1), claimed by the leaders also live here.

**Tactics:** These goblins will attack fiercely before retreating to the common cave to co-ordinate the defence of the warren.

**11 Drek's Cave (EL 6):** Drek and his two females occupy this room, which contains small bits of furniture but is relatively sparse. The bedding furs are the newest and best in the tribe but the real focus of the room is the tribal treasure, which is piled haphazardly along the walls.

**Tactics:** By the time invaders reach Drek, there should be several other warriors or priests with him. The defenders will make use of the natural bottleneck of the small corridors to strengthen their defence. If things go poorly, however, they will flee, leaving the treasure in an effort to distract the invaders.

**Treasure:** The Game Master is encouraged to create a treasure store of coin, gems, minor magic and mundane items suitable for their campaign. (Suggested value of 12,000 GP.)

**12 Trapped Room (EL 5):** A single orc zombie inhabits the dead end tunnel to the west of the room with orders to shuffle around and make noise. The room itself is strewn with old furs and garbage but the noisy zombie, not visible from the north hall, should be enough to entice the curious through the door and into the trap. The zombie is not considered in the CR, as it does not attack.

**13 Water Entrance Guard Post (EL Varies, 1+):** The water running into the warren averages a depth of 2-ft. and ends in area 6. The tunnels marked at area 13 hold a total of 1d8+3 warriors at all times charged with guarding the secret entrance into the caves. The four openings are a total of 10-ft. above the water, allowing the guards to fire arrows down on intruders. These openings are not immediately apparent to those in the corridor and a Spot check (DC 15) is required to notice them. Characters wishing to climb the slippery walls are faced with a considerable challenge (DC 30). The secret door in this area is very hard to find, Search (DC25), from either side. Wooden planks on either side of the passage can be pushed across the opening to allow the defenders to manoeuvre the full circle (this takes two rounds and two goblins). Several casks of lamp oil are stored on each side of the passage for defence.

**Tactics:** The guards in this area will fire arrows down on intruders hoping to slow them and possibly force them to retreat. They will wait until invaders are positioned in the centre of the area thus allowing attacks from all four openings. They will use oil and fire, which burns on top of the water, to deter attackers.

**14 Trapped Room (EL 5):** 2d6 dire rats inhabit this room (*Core Rulebook III*). The floor is strewn with old furs and a scattering of coins (4d8 copper, 2d8 silver, 2d4 gold), just enough to entice the curious through the door and into the trap.



# GOBLIN REFERENCE LIST

This chapter provides Games Masters with a variety of ready-made goblins. These creatures are complete and easily dropped directly into a game with no preparation or can be easily customised to meet campaign needs. An attempt has been made to offer a wide range of archetypes but great variety still exists among differing tribes. Adventurers should never make assumptions about the capabilities of this intelligent and adaptable race.

All goblins receive a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

## GOBLIN CHIEF

**2<sup>nd</sup> Level Warrior/2<sup>nd</sup> Level Fighter/3<sup>rd</sup> Level Rogue**

**HD:** 2d8+2d10+3d6+10 (37 HP); **Init:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 16 (+1 size, +3 studded leather armour, +2 Dex); **Attacks:** MW battleaxe +10/+5 melee, javelin +9/+4 ranged; **Damage:** MW battleaxe 1d8+1, javelin 1d6+1; **SQ:** Sneak attack +2d6, evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); **SV:** Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11; **Skills:** Bluff +5, Climb +3, Diplomacy +5, Hide +11, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Ride +4, Spot +6; **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe); **Items:** MW studded leather, MW battleaxe (two handed), javelin (medium); **CR:** 6.

## GOBLIN PRIEST

**3<sup>rd</sup> Level Adept/3<sup>rd</sup> Level Cleric**

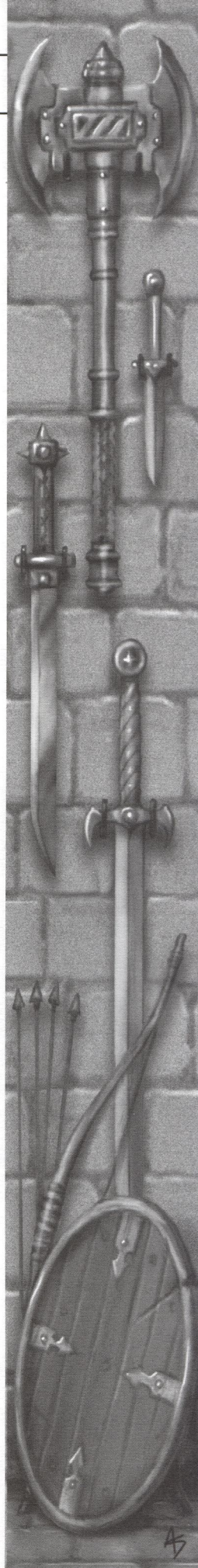
**HD:** 3d6+3d8 (21 HP); **Init:** +1 (+1 Dex); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 15 (+1 size, +3 studded leather armour, +1 Dex); **Attacks:** Alchemist's fire +5 ranged, MW morningstar +4 melee; **Damage:** Alchemist's fire 1d6, MW morningstar 1d8-1; **SV:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; **Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10; **Skills:** Alchemy +4, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +2, Heal +6, Hide +6, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Scry +4,

Spellcraft +5, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +5; **Feats:** Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting; **Items:** Studded leather, alchemist's fire, MW morningstar (two handed); **Spells:** DC 12 + spell level (*cleric*) 0 - *cure minor wounds*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *resistance*; 1st - *cure light wounds*, *doom*, *inflict light wounds* (d), *shield of faith*; 2nd - *desecrate* (d), *enthrall*, *summon monster II* (adept) 0 - *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*; 1st - *bless*, *command*, *sleep*. **Domain Power:** Smite power once per day, Evil spells +1 caster level; **CR:** 5.

## GOBLIN HERO/ LIEUTENANT

**2<sup>nd</sup> Level Warrior/2<sup>nd</sup> Level Fighter/1<sup>st</sup> Level Rogue**

**HD:** 2d8+2d10+1d6+5 (26 HP); **Init:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 16 (+1 size, +3 studded leather armour, +2 Dex); **Attacks:** MW morningstar +7 melee, MW shortbow +7 ranged; **Damage:** MW morningstar 1d8, MW shortbow 1d6; **SQ:** Sneak attack +1d6; **SV:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +0; **Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11,





Cha 10; **Skills:** Bluff +5, Climb +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, ride +5, Spot +4; **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Morningstar); **Items:** MW studded leather, MW morningstar (two handed), MW Shortbow; **CR:** 4.

## GOBLIN SHAMAN

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Adept

**HD:** 3d6 (9 HP); **Init:** +1 (+1 Dex); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 12 (+1 Dex, +1 size); **Attacks:** Sling +3 ranged, morningstar +1 melee; **Damage:** Morningstar 1d6-1, alchemist's fire 1d6; **SV:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; **Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10; **Skills:** Alchemy +3, Concentration +3, Heal +3, Hide +7, Knowledge (hearth wisdom) +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +5, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5; **Feats:** Alertness, Brew Potion; **Items:** Morningstar (small, one handed), alchemist's fire; **Spells:** DC 11 + spell level 0 - *Create Water, Ghost Sound, Guidance*; 1st - *Bless, Burning Hands, Sleep*; **CR:** 3.

## GOBLIN ROGUE

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Rogue

**HD:** 3d6 (9 HP); **Init:** +2 (+2 Dex); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 16 (+3 studded leather, +2 Dex, +1 size); **Attacks:** Short sword +2 melee, shortbow or tanglefoot bag +5 ranged; **Damage:** Shortsword 1d6-1, shortbow 1d6-1; **SQ:** Sneak attack +1d6; **SV:** Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8; **Skills:** Balance +9, Climb +4, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +14, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Search +6, Spot +9, Tumble +7; **Feats:** Alertness, Skill Focus (hide); **Items:** MW studded leather, shortsword, tanglefoot bag, shortbow; **CR:** 3.

## GOBLIN CAVALRY

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Warrior

**HD:** 3d8 (12 HP); **Init:** +2 (+2 Dex); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 15 (+2 leather armour, +2 Dex, +1 size); **Attacks:** Light lance or morningstar +3 melee, javelin +6 ranged; **Damage:** javelin 1d4-1, light lance or morningstar 1d6-1; **SV:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Balance +3, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Ride +10\*, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +2; **Feats:** Alertness, \*Mounted Combat, Skill Focus (ride); **Items:** Leather armour, light lance, morningstar (small, one handed), javelin (small); **CR:** 2.

## GOBLIN HERO/ SERGEANT

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Warrior

**HD:** 3d8+3+3 (Toughness) (18 HP); **Init:** +1 (+1 Dex); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** 15 (+3 studded leather, +1 Dex, +1 size); **Attacks:** Battleaxe or morningstar +4 melee, javelin +5 ranged; **Damage:** Battleaxe or morningstar 1d8, javelin 1d6; **SV:** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8; **Skills:** Climb -1, Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Alertness, Toughness; **Items:** Studded leather, battleaxe (two handed) or morningstar (two handed), javelin (medium); **CR:** 2.





## GOBLIN WARRIOR/ ARCHER

### 1<sup>st</sup> Level Warrior

**HD:** 1d8 (4 HP); **Init:** +1 (+1 Dex); **Spd:** 30ft.; **AC:** (*Warrior*) 16 (+3 studded leather, +1 Dex, +1 size, +1 small wooden shield) (*Archer*) 14 (+2 Leather, +1 Dex, +1 size); **Attacks:** (*Warrior*) Short sword or morningstar +1 melee, javelin +3 ranged, (*Archer*) shortbow +3 ranged, short sword +1 melee; **Damage:** (*Warrior*) short sword or morningstar 1d6-1 or javelin 1d4-1, (*Archer*) shortbow 1d4-1, short sword 1d6-1; **SV:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; **Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8; **Skills:** (*Warrior*) Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, (*Archer*) Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3; **Feats:** Alertness; **Items:** (*Warrior*) Studded leather, wooden shield, javelin (small), morningstar (small, one handed) or shortsword, (*Archer*) leather armour, shortbow (small), shortsword; **CR:** 1/4.

## GOBLIN FEMALE

**HD:** 1/2d8+1 (3 HP); **Init:** +0; **Spd:** 30ft; **AC:** 11 (+1 size); **Attacks:** Club or Dagger -1 melee; **Damage:** Club 1d6-2 or Dagger 1d4-2; **SV:** Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 5; **Skills:** Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; **Feats:** Alertness; **Items:** Club (two handed) or dagger; **CR:** 1/8.

## GOBLIN YOUNG

### Tiny Humanoid (Goblinoid)

**HD:** 1/4d8-1 (1 HP); **Init:** +0; **Spd:** 20ft; **AC:** 12 (+2 size); **Attacks:** Bite -1 melee; **Damage:** Bite 1; **SV:** Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; **Abilities:** Str 4, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 4; **Skills:** Hide +9, Listen +1, Move Silently +5, Spot +1; **Feats:** Alertness; **Items:** None; **CR:** 1/16

The old priest laid the torn and discoloured map on the dark table before the four adventurers and raised the flame on the lamp. 'Here, is where you will find the creatures,' he began, 'follow this trail... Here, through the wood 'til noon of the third day. Then, go half 'round the mere and turn up into the foothills. The lair should be close by the end of the first day in the hills. Do take care, I pray.'

The dwarf chortled, 'For goblin ye would have me take care man? I've been slaying these foul cowards since ye were a toddler. If there be a trick I've not seen, I'll shave me beard!'

Sarem, the halfling laughed at Korl's boast, adding she would pay to see his chin. The elven mage, however, raised her hand to still the group. 'As confident as we seem, good priest, be assured we will not be hasty in action. Several years together have made us confident only of our bond and desire to defeat evil. My companion was only expressing his eagerness to aid your town.'

Korl nodded, 'I think we should even set out tonight. Me axe hand is itchin' with a want fer goblin necks.'

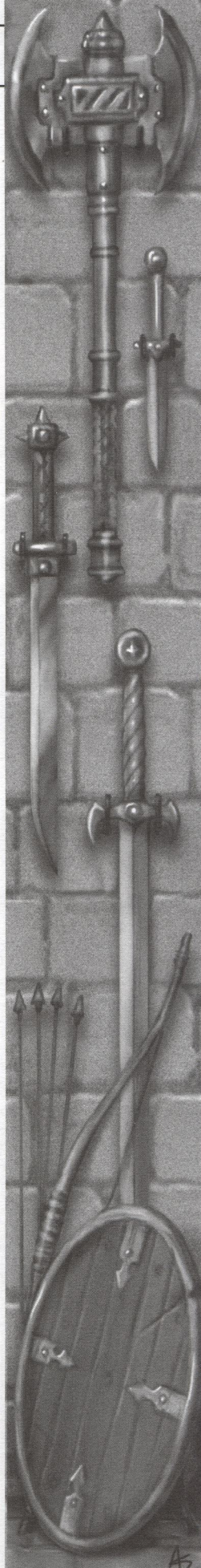
'Yeah, we'll be back in a week,' the rogue added with a smile, 'just have the reward handy when we return, Your Holiness. You worry about counting gold and we'll worry about those pesky beasties!'

The dwarf laughed out loud at his little friend but the party's cleric was not impressed, 'Please, friends! Can you not be sensitive to the loss in this community?' He turned to the aged priest, 'Johan, we will take due care and bring this evil to an end.'

The ancient priest was saddened by dwarf and halfling's levity, 'So many underestimate the goblin', he thought, 'and die.' He replied to the human cleric, 'You may take care as you say, Thurm. I know your intentions are true. Understand, however, these creatures are not to be trifled with. I venture not even our stalwart dwarf has faced this enemy on its own terms before. Theirs is a violent world of hate and death. They will not tolerate you and will spare nothing to repel you. When you least expect they will attack and then disappear when pressed. They will be everywhere at once, watching and waiting to spring.'

The old priest rose on his staff to leave, 'I will ask of my god, his hand to guide you on your quest. It is a perilous course you steer for our village. Our hearts and prayers will accompany you.' The friends nodded solemnly. Thurm and Tabithias, the mage, embraced the old priest and he left the room.

The party gathered their things and set off down the path to the goblin lair.





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# THE SLAYER'S GUIDE TO GOBLINS

## Filth and Malice

For millennia, evil warlords, wizards, dragons and larger goblinoids have enslaved the lowly goblin. Untold thousands are slain every year by these same dark masters, by the armies of good folk everywhere and by countless brave adventurers. Through seemingly endless adversity, the goblins overcome and continue to thrive.

Throughout history, creatures of all types have underestimated the race's cunning and sheer will to survive. Often they have paid for this misconception with their lives. Deep in the warren of a goblin tribe there is no room for error. This harsh and unforgiving environment shapes the goblin and thwarts the invader.

Full of a hatred for all life, driven by their dark god to unspeakable depravity and far more cunning than Game Masters and players have given them credit for, goblins are truly worthy of our respect. They breed faster than most races and, given time, can outlast and overwhelm most enemies. Masters of stealth, traps and ambushes, goblins are rarely spotted until it is too late.

### Inside You Will Find:

Goblin Physiology	Roleplaying Hints
Habitat	Scenario Hooks and Ideas
Goblin Society	The Torn Heads Warren
Methods of Warfare	Reference List

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